THE NEW MORALITY

A Candid Criticism

HENRY C. DAY, S.J.

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THE NEW MORALITY

A Candid Criticism

By HENRY C. DAY, S.J.

Author of "Marriage, Divorce and Morality," etc.

WITH A FOREWORD BY

LADY SYKES

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FOREWORD

THESE pages scarcely need an introduction to those who care for the well-being of mankind and see with sorrow and anxiety the misdirected efforts of materially minded zealots, who, thrusting their doctrines of ease and physical comfort upon the public, would with a gesture overthrow the old accepted laws of morality as taught by the Christian Faith.

Father Day's wise exposition of the fallacious arguments used by the promotors of these theories should go far towards opening the eyes of those who have unhappily been led away by them; he shows clearly and forcibly the fatal consequences that must inevitably follow upon the acceptance of this new morality, and has put forward in plain and unmistakable language the teaching of the Catholic Church. May his words not fall upon deaf ears.

EDITH SYKES

SLEDMERE.

CHAPTER I

LAW OR LICENSE ?

THE NEW MORALITY

CHAPTER I

LAW OR LICENSE?

THERE is no moral question concerning which public opinion is more strangely ignorant or more acutely divided than the question of marriage and the relation of the sexes. Upon other vital points of conduct, though there may be disagreement as to the application of principles, the broad principles themselves are generally accepted. Moreover, the consensus of opinion at the present day in our own country, and in Western Europe generally, as well as in America, may be taken in the gross to represent a progressive morality. We may assume on the whole that society has advanced in recent years rather than receded on the path of social morality. Modern laws and conventions regulating individual liberty have served to correct certain outstanding social abuses of the past. It is also noticeable that there is less license and more discipline in the ordinary

relations of life than has been the case in former periods. Time was when lawlessness, violence, and intemperance were commonly condoned, or even held to be praiseworthy. But the modern conscience is fast outgrowing, if it has not already outgrown, this juvenile and criminal phase. It will hardly be denied that in regard to honesty, sobriety, humanity, and most social virtues, the attitude of society—whatever may be the practice of many of its members—is strictly correct, the enormous balance of opinion being strongly in favour of these virtues, and equally averse to their violation. But in the sphere of sexual morality the reverse of this is witnessed, and we are faced with quite contrary conditions. Instead of a common judgment providing a basis for public guidance and moral legislation, a confusion of conflicting opinions, on which no prudent reliance can be placed, is generally apparent. These current opinions, moreover, as far as they can be judged of, reveal in the aggregate not a progressive, but a distinctly retrogressive and perverted morality. In fact, the new ethic, instead of being, as it claims to be, an advance through higher ideals towards a greater freedom and enlightenment, is a backward step consisting in a reversion to debased pagan and servile standards. Not only do we find that traditional rules of conduct are being set aside, but we are forced to see that the very principles of purity established by long centuries of Christianity for the protection of society are being attacked, while a radical reversal of moral values is being peremptorily demanded. True, in all ages of the Christian world, sensuality and

impurity have been practised, but only in ages of special degeneracy have they been proclaimed and taught as a rational theory. In other times men and women sinned with a knowledge of guilt; but ordinarily they did not attempt, as they do now, to pass off frivolity and passion for morality and virtue. This characteristic form of modern make-believe in sex matters is the greatest possible danger to society, and a grave indictment of its moral decadence. Underlying all the modern ethical ideas of purity, comprehensively expressed under the title of the new morality, is the principle of allowing the utmost independence in the sphere of marriage and the sex relationship. To secure this, the new teaching, which is closely allied with materialistic agnosticism, demands the removal as far as possible of the ancient barriers of laws, conventions and religion. It claims to rest its case on the inner nature of life, liberty and love. Taking for its motto, "the right to love," it makes use of such vague catchwords as "the freedom of love," "the enhancement of life," "self-realization," "the sex urge," and the like, to appeal to the popular emotions of an age that reads much, thinks little, and is largely ignorant of the true meaning of terms.

The exponents of this plausible theory argue that love is supreme, and therefore must be unfettered; that love which is associated with compulsion is not love at all; that marriage without love is sin, and that when love ceases, marriage likewise ends. Therefore, in the interests of individual liberty and of collective or social progress, all restrictions of legality, which are

trammels of the will and an undue coercion, must be once and for all abandoned. The error of this argument arises out of a confusion of ideas. Its method is the old fallacy of begging the question. That there is a love which is supreme and sovereign is indisputable. But such love is not the love or desire of sex on behalf of which the modern claim is made. Nor is this claim strengthened by describing sexual longings as the result of "psychical affinities," or as "expressions of natural tendencies." These affinities and tendencies, though they may and should be present, are not essential to sex love, which properly consists in a merely natural reaction to a purely animal instinct. Sex love, therefore, as such, has no claim to be sovereign, or in any sense supreme. At best it is the servant or handmaid of the higher, nobler and unselfish love of the spirit—of the will submitted to reason and informed by grace—which is proper to man. This love is one with the Divine love of Charity. It alone is sovereign and supreme.

The argument for freedom is equally fallacious. Here the first and persistent error of the new teaching is the assumption that legal, social and religious restraints are merely artificial, and adapted only to create an unnatural servitude. This assumption, in reality, is the inversion of the truth. External restraints are natural, and not artificial. Instead of inducing slavery, they promote and enhance freedom. These restraints are natural because they derive their origin from the very nature of rational love and spring from well-ordered charity. This supreme virtue, residing in

the depths of the human soul, and linked with its highest and holiest powers, is the watchful guardian of the moral consciousness of society no less than of individuals. It dictates the duties and responsibilities of love, and is the real author of the rules and restraints which govern its exercise. It is this same virtue of love which compels the acceptance of every one of the principles of moral restraint.

What has been said is borne out by experience, which witnesses to the fact that a true love in man or woman is ordinarily followed by a quickened perception of the consequences of action, and a more practical recognition of the higher responsibilities of life. True lovers are wont to show consideration for the rights and enjoyments of others, and not to occupy themselves exclusively with their own personal desires. Further, love works humility, and those who practise love are quick to recognize their weakness. In view of the lofty ideals and high demands which that virtue makes on them, they willingly accept and readily invoke the assistance of external restraints, recognizing in these, not man-made bonds of servitude, but Nature's instruments for the securing of moral freedom. To see the justice of this conclusion, we have only to ask and answer two questions with ordinary candour—What is moral freedom? and how can it be secured? If moral freedom is liberty for caprice and folly, for the indulgence of lust and unholy desires, for the loosing of the brute and the binding of the man, then legal and religious restraints are hindrances and servitude. But if the meaning of freedom is the liberty of the spiritual

man to face his responsibilities, to secure the equal rights of others, to dominate his animal passions, to emancipate himself from the tyranny of sense and physical conditions, to realize his higher nature, to fulfil his destiny to the utmost—then the contrary of this is true, and these external restraints are the very fortress of freedom and the stronghold of personal and social progress.

To all who admit the doctrine of moral freedom in the only true sense of the term, as the power of the will freely to determine itself, to will a thing or not to will it, to will this particular thing or some other, the above conclusion is indisputable. But that admission is not according to the position of the modern rationalists and materialists who are responsible for the new ethic. Strange as it may seem, these same persons who clamour so loudly for freedom are equally insistent in denying that on which all moral freedom and true liberty depends—volitional liberty. Man, they say, is not a free agent in the sense of being master of his own acts. On the contrary, in regard to these he is dependent on forces and circumstances outside himself. The criminal and vicious, according to this view, are criminal and vicious because of external conditions of heredity and environment, which are beyond their control, and the virtuous are virtuous for the same reason. The only freedom is exemption from the coercion of law. Hence the claim is made to express all natural tendencies without let or hindrance: that is, in the name of freedom, liberty is demanded to think, act and indulge passion, independently of

authority, whether human or Divine. Such liberty is physical and non-moral. Any moral or spiritual value attaching to it in practice is, therefore, divided from the motives and conditions accompanying its exercise. At best it is personal liberty, at worst it is moral slavery. To withhold personal liberty from an individual or a nation, without sufficient reason, is a damaging deprivation of right, and a harmful tyranny. On the other hand, the mere limitation of liberty implied in the exercise of lawfully constituted authority, while it robs nothing which properly belongs to liberty, protects the individual and society, and promotes moral freedom. To grant license is to create servitude.

Thus, lawfully constituted authority, with its machinery of external restraints, is the complement and condition of liberty. Do away with it, and you leave men and nations at the mercy of tyrants. More particularly is this true in the matter of purity. The thought of what would become of a society which renounced its responsibilities in this regard, and gave over the sex relation to the liberty of individual discretion, is one that appals the imagination. Lust, cruelty, and all animal propensities would be free. But love and liberty would be in bonds, and men and women would curse the freedom that made them slaves.

The external restraints, therefore, of religion, of law, and of social convention, so far from being an unjust coercion, and a hindrance to personal and social progress, are the natural outcome, as well as the cause and guarantee, of both. By securing the souls of men and women against some of the worst attacks of their

passions, and by strengthening their power of resistance to ordinary temptation, they enable them to vindicate the highest and noblest ideals of which life and love are capable.

What judgment are we then to pass on the prevalence of these new ideas of love and freedom ? The verdict is one of moral decline. The present situation is a reflection of the exaggerated importance which is being attached to material things at the expense of spiritual religion and character. That this is the prominent feature of modern culture is undeniable. Needs formerly at the circumference of life are now at its centre, and erotic emotions and passions are treated as if they were the end and not the means of existence.

Further, these baneful ideas are not merely symptomatic of degeneracy ; they are an active cause of much of the actual depravity witnessed to by the reckless pleasure-seeking, selfish effeminacy, and impure indulgences common to all classes of the people. By breaking down self-control, destroying character, and sapping the vitality of the race, the new morality is directly tending to hurry us into the heart of the Sodom and Gomorrah at whose gates we would seem already to be standing.

Indications of the danger which threatens us are on every side ; but perhaps the most alarming of all at the moment is the increasing number of crimes of violence arising out of sex passion among young people, and a tendency of the public to condone and palliate these offences. A boy attempts to kill the girl who rejects him, or a girl tries to kill the boy who proves

faithless; a young man shoots his successful rival, or murders a husband with the connivance of a young wife; or youthful lovers, when circumstances are unpropitious, agree to a suicide pact. Items of this sort are now commonplaces of the news of the day. And what is the attitude of public opinion? If we are to believe the Press, which describes these degrading crimes as "love tragedies," there is a large amount of misspent sympathy extended to the perpetrators on the part of many persons who are excessively indulgent towards this form of delinquency. Other people, on the contrary (no doubt, the immense majority), are properly indignant and horrified. In their amazement, they look out for some explanation, and, failing to find any that satisfies, they fall back on the war as the cause and on the general unsettlement that followed it. But these causes are insufficient; the real reasons are remoter and deeper. The war may have precipitated the evils complained of, but the conditions of those evils were before the war, and the same conditions are still with us. In Part I of the recently published Criminal Statistics for 1921, facts are tabulated from which the writer of an article in *The Tablet* of April 28th, 1923, entitled "Pre-War and Post-War Crime," has made an accurate comparison at every turn with the position in 1913, the year before the war. He shows that, except for one significant category of offences, the volume of post-war crime is in important respects less than in the year just before the war. The total of indictable offences in 1921, though showing an increase of 738 compared with 1920, were still 1,914 fewer than

in 1913. In minor offences there was a big decline of upwards of 88,000 on the previous year, whilst as compared with 1913 they fell by 156,572, the 1921 figure being 523,718 against 680,290 in the last pre-war year. In 1921 it must be noted that there was a rise in offences of larceny and fraud, which, however, is attributed by the authorities to a large extent to the bad trade and hard times which prevailed during that year. Offences of violence against the person, on the other hand, which numbered 1,387 in 1913 declined in 1921 to 966. In one particular, however, there is a notable increase on pre-war offences. Sexual offences, including bigamy, totalled 2,855, a slightly lesser number than that shown in the previous year, but distinctly larger than the last pre-war record. Moreover, it is pointed out that "if bigamy is excluded, there are substantial decreases in both groups of offences against the person"—that is to say, offences of violence and sexual offences. The growth of bigamy, however, arising as it does out of a widespread disregard of the marriage bond, marks a loosening of the moral sense which weighs heavily against the lesser number of sexual offences reported. Still, the general conclusion is undeniable that the war, and the blunting of the moral sense that comes with war, cannot be held responsible for the phenomenon of *crimes passionelles* which is observed to colour many and various forms of offences. For if, as the official statistics show, the war has not increased the volume of general criminality, neither can the war be indicted in the matter of a particular criminal tendency to which it has no immediate or necessary relation.

To what, then, are the evils in question attributable? They are the natural result of nearly a century of irreligious and anti-Christian sex propaganda which has gradually spread from the Continent to this country. Until recently the system of society in England may be said to have rested on the moral law as interpreted by religion. In the nurseries, in the schools, and in the churches, the principles of Christian conduct were constantly instilled into the people, who came to accept them—at least, in theory—as a matter of custom. But much of this, unhappily, is now changed, and the country has already gone a long way on the path of transition from a religious to a non-religious phase. Supernatural and dogmatic religion, which alone count in the long run, are being relegated by an increasing majority to the scrap heap of worn-out superstitions. Parents do not accept, and will not impose religion on their children. The churches are fast emptying. In the schools, instead of Christian moral teaching, children are receiving secular education, while in the homes parents are content to impress a few general admonitions to secure external obedience and outward domestic peace. For the rest, the child, often pampered, is left to choose for itself, later on, what, if any, religion it will adopt. Deprived of the guidance of any strong religious principles, it grows up to find itself at the mercy of its own natural instincts and impulses. When the strongest of these is thwarted, and a sex crisis arises in its life, the result is most often disaster.

It was once the ambition of rationalists to substitute the principles of pagan philosophers for those of Christ.

The unreligion of our day is content to reject the supernatural foundation of Christian morality, and to set no positive philosophy of conduct in its place. A return to the old paganism, and the ethical principles of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, were better than this. For if paganism at its best was unable to fulfil its ideals, at least it was not wanting in high conceptions. In classic Greek poetry and philosophy, great and true conceptions of love, representing a higher, purer and nobler standard than sensual passion or natural desire, are widespread. The Eros or Love god of Hesiod is the fairest of the gods, who rules over the minds and councils of men and divinities, and brings order and harmony out of chaos. In this idea is nothing " erotic " in our actual sense of the word. Greek philosophy expressed the same high thoughts as Greek poetry. To the lofty mind of Plato, love was the sympathy of spiritual affinity, the rushing together of kindred souls in a union, prompted and strengthened, but never dishonoured, by physical feeling and natural desire. The Stoics even taught a yet higher ideal, and claimed to found their ethic on the brotherhood of men as being of a common and divine origin. " For we," says the Hymn of Cleanthes, " are thine own offspring alone of all mortal things that live and walk the earth, moulded in the image of the All." Many other passages could be quoted to show the belief of pagan writers that the house of love cannot be built on passion, and that it requires the foundation of at least natural religion. The transitional stage of the unreligion of our day has swept away the support of Christian morality, and

failed to replace it by any reasoned ethic. This is a grave danger. What is the remedy? There is only one: it is to go back to the old Christian tradition, and to learn once more from the crucified Christ the lesson of life. He is "the Way" that leads to moral health and spiritual freedom. The door of that way is His Cross. Christian love is founded on sacrifice, and the law of life is the law of self-control and denial. Growth in knowledge and education are vain remedies. They can only lead to a greater refinement of vice if the sensual passions be not brought under the subjection of the law and the spirit of Christ. Many of the old pagan philosophers expressed in eloquent terms the doctrine of self-control. But not one of them was able to win a single city to its practice. Neither eloquence nor wisdom without supernatural motives has ever conquered the power of the passions. The Christian gospel alone has this saving virtue. If the worst social and individual disasters are yet to be averted, men must learn again from Him who is "the Way, the Truth and the Life," that salvation for individuals and for society is not in indulgence, but in restraint, and that the condition of freedom is law, not license.

CHAPTER II

FREE LOVE OR MONOGAMY

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THE modern doctrine of the "freedom of love" or "the right to sex life" implies, as has been suggested, the claim that monogamy shall give place to sex relations of a less permanent character. What the new relations are we shall consider presently. The first need is to understand that the general demand, by calling for a radical change in the form of the family, is sociologically revolutionary. The family, founded on the sex relation in one form or another, is by common consent the social unit, the keystone of society. All sociologists, except a few extreme radicals, who would wholly abolish the family, are agreed in this. The vast majority also recognize that the form of the family arising out of the abiding monogamic relation of marriage, between one man and one woman, is proved to be the best in fact and theory. Not only is it the highest ideal because it corresponds to the highest ethical and moral sentiment, which demands that love shall attach itself without end or change to one supreme object; but it is of the greatest practical utility, because it has given to the world the highest civilizations, the happiest

homes, and the purest families. An outstanding fact in history, the significance of which is unmistakable, is the admitted superiority—political, physical, mental and moral — of the monogamic Aryan family of nations over the semitic and African peoples, who have for the most part practised polygamy. Greece in her pure days, Rome before the decline of Empire, the great nations of Europe, and pre-eminently the Teutonic and Saxon, all provide in their different histories eloquent testimony to the social value of monogamy.

What, then, are the sociological functions of the family which cause this form of marriage to have such high importance? Modern orthodox writers, regarding the subject from the standpoint of science, are accustomed to describe the functions in question as a two-fold control of heredity and environment. Without accepting this as a complete or adequate description, we can take it as a correct classification of the duties of parentage as far, at least, as these are comprised under "natural" or "nurtural" eugenics. Further, by understanding heredity to imply "good birth," and environment not only physically but also morally healthy surroundings, there is no difficulty in concluding the great value of these factors in human life. For between them on the one hand, and good character and good conduct on the other, there is a certain, though not a necessary, relation. To be born good is one way to become good, and to live in a morally healthy atmosphere is no mean help to keep good. To this extent heredity and environment count. Now monogamous

marriage best of all controls these elements. First, it controls heredity by providing pure parents, pure generation, pure conception, pure birth. In this way marriage fulfils the first function of the family. Secondly, it controls environment by furnishing the necessary physical conditions and the right moral atmosphere for child-life. The physical conditions—such as food, clothing, shelter, and the like—might conceivably be otherwise secured, as through the State: not so the right moral atmosphere. This right moral atmosphere, in a word, is love. If life is love, child-life is supremely love. Children can only come into life, and continue in life, by love. Their dependence on the peace and happiness of a loving home is complete and absolute. Marriage, by uniting the hearts of parents and children in an abiding bond of intimate affection, alone can guarantee this love. Thus it also fulfils the second function of the family.

Next consider the substitutes which the advocates of "free love" propose in the place of this time-approved and honoured institution of marriage. And first it should be noted that the forms of "free love" are many and various, and that not all of them, by any means, can be set aside as merely material, animal and low. Amongst the protagonists of "free love," as well in the past as in the present, are counted many idealists, including great and noble names, who can never be associated with anything debased in intention or character. Plato and Campanella, St. Simon and Fourier, and William Morris, were all earnest and high-minded men. However erroneous and dangerous their

theories, they were free from immoral or licentious purpose.

The first form of "free love" was advocated as far back as 400 B.C. by the Greek philosopher Plato, and embodied in his idea of a Socialist Republic. According to that idea, wives, as all else, should be in common, and children should belong to the community. In practice the system relegated the whole responsibility of begetting and rearing offspring to the State, which was authorized to control sexual relations within limits prescribed by conditions of age and of physical, mental and moral fitness. The children resulting from such intercourse were to be taken at once after birth and placed under the charge of the community.

This idea of "free love," which dangerously approaches promiscuity, or complete liberty of intercourse between the sexes without any restraint or responsibility, has since been adopted at different periods by extreme Socialists and Communists in various countries. Even as late as the eighteenth century this ancient theory, only slightly modified, was advanced by such notable Socialist authorities as St. Simon and Fourier. At the time it received considerable support, not only in France, but also, though in a less measure, in our own and several other countries of Europe. Amongst doctrinaire Socialists it still has some secret followers who yet cherish the hope of approximating to the Platonic ideal, through marriage reform and education.

Another form of "free love," which originated in the last century, and is put forward not in the name of

Socialism, but in that of religion, claims Biblical sanction and employs ecclesiastical rites. It is the system which has been adopted by a few self-styled Christian sects, including certain of the older Anabaptists in Germany, the Perfectionists of Noyes' Oneida Community, and the Mormons of Salt Lake City, in America. Whatever the theory of these people may be, their practice is to marry all the males to all the females of the community, and to allow intercourse subject only to due consideration and consultation in regard to the wisdom and ethical character of the relation.

A third form of "free love," known as promiscuity, is sheer libertinism. Fortunately, it has no reputable defenders; nor has it any case to present to decent or honest minds. It is only mentioned because other forms of "free love," however differently intended, are apt in practice to lead to this deeper than animal degradation.

Of the forms of "free love" just set forth, the Socialist idea of the great Athenian philosopher alone carries weight. But even that theory is obviously too destructive of family life and of individual right to be a serious social or moral menace to the democracies of to-day. Especially is this true of the democracy of our own country, where individualism and domesticity are deeply ingrained in the national character and tradition. But there is a mitigated form of "free love" which is a formidable danger of the utmost gravity to the modern world. It arises immediately from the false principles of the sovereignty and freedom of love considered in the previous chapter. It consists

in the union of man and woman contracted without the intervention of any social authority. Thus, it represents the claim that all external law, civil as well as religious, in regard to marriage shall be abandoned, and that the sex relation shall be governed solely by the rule of a so-called ideal love, which in reality amounts only to a purely animal and sensual passion. It is a mitigated form of "free love" in as much as it rejects Communism in wives and children, and preserves some appearance of marriage and wedded life. Its claim has been expressed by a modern writer thus: "He who feels strongly enough need not ask himself whether he has a right to that feeling—he is so enlarged by his love he feels the life of humanity is enlarged by him."

Such a love is a law to itself. The crude plea need not detain us. It is evidently monstrous to suppose that the life of an individual and that of humanity could be so enlarged and enfranchised by a corruptive, wasteful and pernicious passion as to be made independent and free of external law. But the same argument more scientifically expounded by the German School of the "Neue Ethik," which is responsible for the doctrine of "free union," requires to be seriously dealt with. According to the patrons of that school of new morality, it is the exclusive prerogative of love, understood as an intimate union of hearts, to rule and regulate marriage. As long as the rule of such a love endures, the conjugal union will spontaneously endure; but when that love ceases, the union in effect ceases, and the only right and reasonable course is for the parties to recognize the cessation of the marriage bond, which

if externally adhered to can only be a pretence and serve as a false sanction of an abnormal and immoral relation. The argument is undoubtedly specious and attractive, and it is in the direction of the acceptance of the views contained in it that popular opinion throughout Europe is consciously or unconsciously tending. This form of "free love" may, therefore, rightly be called the modern theory "free love." For not only is it held by a large and increasing number of men and women of various schools of thought, but it further expresses an ideal vaguely present to a much larger section of ordinary thinking people who, having no fixed principles, are sentimentally attracted to a form of marriage which, while providing greater freedom, presents no evident appearance of gross licentiousness. It is also the key idea of the whole complex of modern conceptions which are being directed through marriage reform, divorce and birth control, against marriage.

The actual propaganda is described as promoted by "many Socialists, more Individualists, and all Anarchists." Women, unfortunately for their sex, figure largely amongst its leading supporters. All these persons are agreed that neither the State nor organized religion should have anything to do with marriage and the family. The more thoughtful admit that the present economic condition of industrial society is not yet adapted to allow the majority of the people to enter at once upon this form of marriage. They therefore urge reforms to create wider financial independence ; and they insist especially on the adoption of such physical, mental and moral education as will prevent

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men and women from abusing their liberty. They believe, moreover, that humanity, once freed from its dependence on priest and policeman, will be quick to prove itself capable of pure " free love." But whether the preparation be rapid or slow, this at least is the goal towards which they believe that law and practice should tend. Further, they maintain that, this goal once gained, men and women will give themselves in love, not for reasons of family, or wealth, or position, or custom, but simply because they love. In this way prostitution and adultery will disappear, and a pure, noble and abiding love will be introduced into the world.

Such is the theory of " free love " that is exercising the most baneful influence to-day. Its error and danger should be sufficiently evident. In effect the doctrine is a claim for the arbitrary dissolubility of marriage. Thereby it conflicts with a primary precept of the natural law, and consequently threatens the fundamental well-being of society. None can doubt that the natural law requires at least the intrinsic indissolubility of marriage : that is, that marriage may not be dissolved from within, or at the mere pleasure of the contracting parties. This measure of stability is the absolute minimum for the essential purpose of marriage—the proper propagation of the race and the education of the children. Its rejection would mean the ruin of married life and of the family. The doctrine is therefore a dangerous attack on society.

Its philosophical foundation, as far as it can be said to be based on philosophy, is the frankly egotistical

philosophy of hedonism, which exalts the individual at the expense of society, and proclaims the inalienable right of each to pleasure and self-chosen happiness. From this doctrine the idea that carnal love justifies all things follows logically. And this idea finds open and unashamed expression in nearly all the modern romantic literature of the Continent.

Bockenhoff, an outstanding authority, speaking of Germany and Europe generally, asserts in his book on "The Indissolubility of Marriage" that: "Out of 80 modern novels, 17 on an average ridicule marriage as an effete and obsolete institution, 11 emphasize the necessity and advantages of divorce, 22 uphold 'free love,' 7 openly mock and deride the ideal of conjugal fidelity, and 23 speak in the same scandalous manner of the institution of marriage itself." Fed on such literature, it is not surprising that the popular tendency to depreciate marriage, and to exalt "free love, and free union," is becoming more and more general. The fact that the attacks on marriage in our own country are more veiled and less aggressively licentious is due to a variety of causes. Two which may be mentioned are the preference of sentiment to logic, and a spirit of compromise. That many of the opponents of marriage in England are honest idealists is true. But that fact does not lessen, rather it increases, the danger of their propaganda. Absence of logic is a perilous foundation for any system of morals, and marriage morality based on sentiment is certainly doomed to disaster.

Against this evident danger it may be contended that

the long tradition of domestic purity in England, and the great love of home life that has always characterized her people, are some safeguard. Unfortunately, owing to the increasing loss of Faith affecting all classes, this barrier of natural virtue is already much weakened, and can no longer be passively relied on. The strong convictions of the old ideals are seen to be all too rapidly yielding to sentiments of misplaced moderation. This is a cause why many well-meaning people condone the errors of these doctrines, and give a partial acquiescence to some of their consequences. Public opinion, therefore, requires to be awakened to the real situation and re-informed, and no pains should be spared to expose and refute the false assumptions and arguments of this modern form of " free love."

The argument from the nature of love which asserts that its rule is superior to laws dictated from the beginning by conscience and reason has already been dealt with in the previous chapter, and will be further treated in connection with the subject of divorce. It is part of the misrepresentation of the true sovereignty of love, and falls with that calumny.

A yet more dangerous error is the underlying assumption of the whole of the present anti-marriage propaganda, that marriage is not a necessary institution, expressive of absolute value, but that it is something contingent and relative, dependent on circumstances, and destined to change with the changing conditions and requirements of life. Support is lent to this error by the evolutionist contention that marriage did not originally exist, and that it was only by passing through

successive stages that the human race arrived at the present system. From this view-point, marriage is liable to be regarded as an outworn system of the past, which has served its purpose, but is no longer of use to mankind. The contention is false and gratuitous. Marriage is not the result of evolution, as we shall subsequently show. On the contrary, it is a human institution rooted in the deepest fibres of our human nature, and planted therein by its Author and Creator. As such it represents an absolute value which the changing currencies of the times cannot alter. Civil laws may touch the fringe of marriage, but the only law that enters into its reality is the law of nature, which prescribes the permanent union of one man with one woman. In this law the essence of the sex relation consists. Why? Because the consequences of this relation in man and woman imply virtues and lasting obligations which no transitory bond can secure, and which require the support of a permanent immutable basis. Amongst these virtues and duties are spiritual freedom, chivalry, loyalty, care of children, devotion and love. They are all to be found in the ideal of marriage, and they have always been maintained where marriage has been held in honour. Moreover, it is only in marriage that they find their fulfilment. Other systems have invariably failed, as the history of the world bears witness. The institution of marriage is therefore natural, and, like the moral law with which it is identified, it is no mere artificial or social convention. It is the expression of the highest human needs. It has eternal value. To depreciate it to the

level of the mutable or transient is to detract from the dignity and sacredness of human nature itself.

Other arguments put forth by the advocates of modern "free love," which make a popular appeal, are directed against fixed monogamy as being opposed to the happiness and freedom of the individual, and consequently as retarding progress and standing in the way of social well-being. These arguments claim to be based on the needs of personality and freedom. But if marriage, as we have seen, is natural, how can it be opposed to personality and freedom? Personality is will, reason, and character, the better and nobler self, the rational soul of a man. Personal freedom is, therefore, the liberty of a man to act as a man, to live in accordance with his conscience, to fulfil his highest requirements. Only life and conduct of this sort are truly personal. The tendency of "free love" is to fetter such life; the tendency of the restraint of marriage is to free it.

The discipline of marriage, therefore, far from hindering personality and freedom, asists and supports them. By bridling passion it is a pillar of personality; by freeing conscience it is a charter of liberty.

This gain on the part of individuality and personal freedom also disproves the second part of the charge against marriage, that it is unfavourable to collective life and progress. For the fundamental condition of the success and progress of the human family as a whole is one with the condition of the development and growth of each of its members. It lies in the strengthening of personality, and in securing the predominance of the higher nature of the individual over his lower and

animal instincts. Only when individual conduct rises above selfishness and egotism can it be conformed to social welfare. In this conformity is the essence of civilization and progress.

In conclusion, the contrast between marriage and "free love" may be resumed thus: whereas marriage by outwardly expressing a variety of most important human requirements, and by providing the means of fulfilling them, confers the highest moral and social boon, the theory of "free love," by neglecting the higher needs and by allowing the surrender of the spiritual personality to the allurements of sexual desire and animal passion, betrays the best interests of individuals and society. If this new theory and the lax ideas which are associated with it were not checked, as in fact they are, by the operative influence of the old tradition, they would wholly destroy personality and freedom, wreck progress and ruin civilization. They are anti-personal, anti-social, anti-national, and anti-racial. Above all, they are anti-Christian, and opposed to all that stands for truth and freedom, for life, for love, and for spiritual resurrection. How different is the influence of marriage! In the first place, it witnesses to the fact that man is not a mere sexual being—that he is, above all, spiritual, and that he has essential aims and objects which transcend the shadows and unrealities of sexual attractions. Thus it tends to ennoble even physical love with a new depth of significance and a new intensity. Above the cravings of the lower nature for erotic pleasures and transient physical excitement, it points to a spiritual goal of

sanctified and abiding charity—a self-sacrificing and devoted attachment, an enduring and undivided love—the love of one, and of one only while life shall last. In particular, it declares that the primary object of this great love consists neither in personal gratification, nor in selfish pleasure, nor in individual interest, nor in any purely material or temporal good, but that it is contained in the subordination of all these to nobler moral, spiritual, and altruistic ends.

What these ends are, and how marriage is furnished with the means to achieve them, will be best considered in connection with the Catholic ideal of Christian marriage.

CHAPTER III

THE CATHOLIC IDEAL OF MARRIAGE

(I) HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

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(1) HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

THE Catholic ideal of marriage, though a progressive development in the history of the race, is no new conception. Neither is it a term of the evolution of science, or the result of civilization. In substance it is the preconceived plan of God for the propagation of the race, impressed on reason from the beginning, and unfolded by revelation. Delayed or frustrated at times in its fulfilment, this plan has never been wholly lost sight of, and in all ages its application has been recognized to answer perfectly human needs, and to fulfil the requirements of man's deepest instincts. Thus it is an absolute, not a relative value ; a creation of God, not of man ; a thing of all time, and not of to-day or yesterday. The complete revelation of the institution of marriage, however, was reserved to the fullness of time, when it became a part of the Christian dispensation, and served in the hands of the Church as a guiding principle of the new Social economy which sprang into being:

The final triumph of this ideal, however, as history shows, was delayed through the survival of pagan conceptions of marriage, which, embodied in Roman Law, continued in Europe, and even found a place in the Imperial Christian Legislation of the first centuries. But later, as Catholic doctrine penetrated more profoundly the general life of society, the laws of the nations gradually accommodated themselves to the demands of the new teaching, until in the early Middle Ages the Catholic and spiritual ideal of marriage became pre-eminent. From the outset it worked a moral and social revolution, and resulted in raising the standard of family life to the highest that the world has known. On the basis of this ideal the structure of Christian civilization has since rested. Unfortunately, in modern times a reaction has set in towards the secular conception of marriage and the family, which now prevails in all the countries of Europe and America, with the exception of the purely Catholic countries of Spain and Ireland. The change may be said to have begun with the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, which, by denying the sacramental character of matrimony, and over-emphasizing individualism in religion and politics, opened the way to many other attacks which have since been made on the traditional teaching of the Church.

Calvin, in his "Institutions," wrote of matrimony: "Lastly, there is matrimony, which all admit was instituted by God, though no one before the time of Gregory regarded it as a sacrament. What man in his sober senses could so regard it? God's ordinance

is good and holy ; so also are agriculture, architecture, shoe-making, hair-cutting, legitimate ordinances of God, but they are not sacraments." And Luther, in his German work published at Wittenberg in 1530, wrote : " No one indeed can deny that marriage is an external worldly thing, like clothes and food, house and home, subject to worldly authority, as shown by so many imperial laws governing it." And in an earlier work on the Babylonian Captivity this statement occurs : " Not only is the sacramental character of matrimony without foundation in Scripture, but the very traditions which claim such sacredness for it are a mere jest ;" and two pages further on : " Marriage may, therefore, be a figure of Christ and the Church ; it is, however, no Divinely instituted Sacrament, but the invention of man in the Church, arising from ignorance of the subject."

The influence of the Protestant doctrine of individualism on the institution of marriage and the family is a matter of frequent reference in the works of Protestant writers. Sir Henry Maine, in his book on " Ancient Law," p. 163, says : " The movement of progressive societies has been uniform in this respect. Through all its course it has been distinguished by the gradual distribution of family dependency and the growth of individual obligation in its place. The individual is steadily substituted for the family as the unit of which civil law takes account." The same opinion is corroborated by Horace Bushnell, who says : " All our modern notions and speculations have taken a bent towards individualism." And President

Thwing, of the Western Reserve University, quoted in the "New Encyclopaedia of Social Reform," writes: "The cause underlying, and in a sense all other causes (of the decay of the modern family), is that growth of individualism which is itself the direct product of the Reformation."

Against this Protestant doctrine which exalts the individual above the family and the State is the Catholic teaching that the family, and not the individual, is the true unit of society.

Another corruptive influence directly traceable to the freedom of thought of the Reformation is the questioning of the Divine origin of marriage by modern evolutionary science. It is not very long ago that we were told that the sexual relation of men and women was at first one of promiscuous union, from which the family was a comparatively late evolution in the process of science, due to the survival of monogamy as the fittest institution for the preservation of life. This was, in fact, the general teaching between 1860 and 1890, and was subscribed to by such well-known anthropologists as Bachofen, McLennon, Morgan, Lubbock, Bastion, Giraud-Teulon, Lippert, Kohler, Post, Wilken, and several others. The common argument arrived at amongst them was that in the earliest stages of human development an indiscriminate community of sex prevailed, and that the first step to progress from this state was the establishment of the mother's right known as "matriarchal." This primitive promiscuity, though otherwise indiscriminate, was generally considered to be limited to individuals belonging to the same tribe.

Sir John Lubbock gave it the name of "communal marriage," indicating by this word that all the men and women in a community were regarded as equally husbands and wives to one another, and all their children brothers and sisters. The advance of this theory was extraordinarily rapid, so that in 1891, according to Westermarck, it was "treated by many writers as a demonstrated truth" ("History of Human Marriage," p. 51). Notwithstanding this, later authorities, like Sir Henry Maine, Herbert Spencer, Paschel, Starcke, and others, have since rejected the hypothesis as unproved. The attitude of contemporary scholars is thus described by Howard: "The researches of several recent writers, notably those of Starcke and Westermarcke, confirming in part and further developing the earlier conclusions of Darwin and Spencer, have established a probability that marriage or pairing between one man and one woman, though the union be often transitory and the rule frequently violated, is the typical form of sexual union from the infancy of the human race" ("History of Matrimonial Institutions," I, pp. 90, 91). The same conclusion is endorsed by recent linguistic evidences which show that even the oldest Aryan languages, before the breaking off of the Teutonic branch, knew nothing of the alleged system of promiscuity, or of the matriarchate, and, on the contrary, point to the supreme position of the father as head of the family. Ernest Grosse confirms this verdict: "There is, in fact," he says, "no single primitive people whose sexual relations approached to a condition of promiscuity, or even hinted at such a

thing. The firmly-knit individual family is by no means a late achievement of civilization ; it exists in the lowest stages of culture as a rule without exception."

According to the original evolutionary theory, which assumed that the social customs of primitive man, including sex relations, differed but slightly from those of the brutes, the marriage contract did not exist, and it was only by passing through successive stages that the human race attained the present system. The several stages were the primitive marriage life of universally and legally recognized *promiscuity*, marriage by *abduction*, and marriage by *purchase*. This theory in all its stages is expounded and criticised at length in the well-known work " On the Origin of Marriage," by Westermarck. Canon de Smet gives a useful analysis of some of the author's arguments. In regard to promiscuity, Westermarck admits (pp. 53-55) that the practice has prevailed, and still continues to prevail in some few and uncivilized countries ; but he goes on to show that many of the facts formerly alleged in its support have since been recognized to be false or insufficiently proved. He further states that, even if admitted, the proofs do not carry the logical inference of the existence of promiscuity as a primitive and universal system of marriage :

" Even if some of the statements are right, and the intercourse between the sexes among a few people really is, or has been, promiscuous, it would be a mistake to infer that these utterly exceptional cases represent a stage of human development which mankind as a whole has gone through. Further, nothing would entitle us

to consider this promiscuity as a survival of the primitive life of man, or even as a mark of a very rude state of society. It is by no means amongst the lowest peoples that sexual relations most nearly approach to promiscuity.

"Mr. Rowney, for instance, states that among the Butias the marriage tie is so loose that chastity is quite unknown, that the husbands are indifferent to the honour of their wives, that the 'intercourse of the sexes is, in fact, promiscuous.' But the Butias are followers of Buddha, and 'can hardly be counted among the *wild* tribes of India, for they are for the most part in good circumstances, and have a certain amount of civilization among them.' On the other hand, among the lowest races on earth, the Veddahs, Fuegians, and Australians, the relations of the two sexes are of a much more definite character. The Veddahs are a truly monogamous people, and have a saying that 'death alone separates husband and wife.' And with reference to the Australians, Mr. Brough Smyth states that, 'though the marriages of aboriginals are not solemnized by any rites . . . it must not be supposed that, as a rule, there is anything like promiscuous intercourse. When a man obtains a good wife, he keeps her as a precious possession, as long as she is fit to help him, and to minister to his wants, and increase his happiness. No other man must look with affection towards her. . . . Promiscuous intercourse is abhorrent to many of them.' Among the aboriginals of the northern and central parts of Australia there are certainly women wholly given up to common lewdness, and a man is considered

to be a bad host who will not lend his wife to a guest. But Mr. Brough Smyth thinks that these practices are modern, and have been acquired since the aborigines were brought in contact with the lower class of the whites, for ' they are altogether irreconcilable with the penal laws in force in former times amongst the natives of Victoria.' It seems obvious, then, that even if there are peoples who actually live promiscuously, these do not afford any evidence whatever for promiscuity having prevailed in primitive times " (*Ibid.*, pp. 60-61).

The author goes on to examine whether the other arguments are more convincing, and in his criticism of the regime of the *matriarchate*, from which the evolutionists derive their chief argument, he makes it clear that this institution, as far as it existed, offers no better proof than do other ancient barbarous customs, such as the alleged *jus primae noctis* and the practice of *interchanging wives* between host and guest, which he briefly dismisses. Under the matriarchate, the child took the name of its mother and inherited only its mother's property. The supposition is that this was due to a community of wives, and the consequent impossibility for children to know their fathers. Westermarck answers the argument (pp. 97-103) by making it clear that, even without taking into account the very limited prevalence of the system, reasons can be given other than those postulated by the evolutionists. He instances the close ties uniting the child with its mother, and, above all, the widespread practice of polygamy. Where this practice existed it was natural to distinguish the children of different mothers, though of the same

father, by giving them the mother's name. In the same way the inheritance of their mother's property by the children accorded with a system in which each wife and mother represented a distinct family, with most frequently a separate establishment. Moreover, even if it be granted that the introduction of the matriarchate was partly due to the uncertainty of paternity, this cause need not have arisen from promiscuity, since conjugal infidelity on the part of wives, or even the mere suspicion of such infidelity, would be sufficient in itself to account for that uncertainty.

Concerning the naming of the children after the mother rather than after the father, the author remarks: "There may be several reasons for naming children after the mother rather than after the father, apart from any consideration of relationship. Especially among savages, the tie between a mother and child is much stronger than that which binds a child to the father. Not only has she given birth to it, but she has also for years been seen carrying it about at her breast. Moreover, in cases of separation, occurring frequently at lower stages of civilization, the infant children always follow the mother, and so, very often, do the children more advanced in age. Is it not natural that they should keep the name of the mother rather than that of a father whom they scarcely know?" (*Op. cit.*, p. 107). And in an earlier chapter on the origin of marriage this statement occurs: "I do not, of course, deny that the tie which bound the children to the mother was much more intimate than that which bound them to the father. But it seems to me that the

only result to which a critical investigation of facts can lead us is, that in all probability there has been no stage of human development when marriage has not existed, and that the father has always been, as a rule, the protector of his family. Human marriage appears, then, to be an inheritance from some ape-like (*sic*) progenitor" (*Op. cit.*, p. 50).

In reply to the argument derived from the tracing of descent in certain cases through the female rather than the male line, the same author says: "The prevalence of the female line would not presuppose general promiscuity even if in some cases it were dependent on uncertainty as to fathers. The separation of husband and wife, adultery on the woman's side, and the practice of lending wives to visitors occurring very frequently among many savage nations, the proverb which says, 'It is a wise child that knows its own father,' holds true for a large number of them. According to Mr. Ingham, the Bakongo, who trace their descent through the mother only, assert as a reason for this custom uncertain paternity; but nevertheless they would be horrified at the idea of promiscuous intercourse." (*Op. cit.*, p. 113).

The criticism we have been following goes on to review the next stage of the evolution of marriage, known as *marriage* by *abduction* and *purchase*. It is alleged to have taken the place of primitive promiscuity in this way: men who wanted wives of their own would carry off or buy a woman, and abandon their claim to the wives of the clan. Here again our author (*Op. cit.*, p. 369 and pp. 372 *seq.*) recognizes both practices up

to a point, but he also recognizes that they never reached a regular phase amounting to a legal and universal stage, through which marriage might be said to have passed. With the Romans marriage by purchase (*per coemptionem*) was certainly a legally recognized form ; and amongst the Hebrews we have the witness of Scripture to the fact that Jacob agreed to serve his uncle Laban seven years for Rachel. In most Teutonic nations also expressions equivalent to a marriage price, or the purchase price of a wife, are found. But such expressions are without any decisive value for the thesis of the evolutionists unless they can be shown to imply a widespread custom, and the actual purchase of the woman apart from the intervention of mutual consent. Now, in the case of the Teutonic languages, proof of these conditions, to say the least, is not forthcoming. In the case of Roman Law there is positive disproof of the second of the two implications required.

As a result of the investigation of all the available evidence, Westermarck closes his scientific criticism of the fact of marriage evolution in these words : " Having now explained all the groups of social phenomena adduced as evidence for the hypothesis of promiscuity, we have found that, in point of fact, they are no evidence. Not one of the customs alleged as relics of an ancient state of indiscriminate cohabitation of the sexes, or ' communal marriage,' presuppose the former existence of that state. The numerous facts put forward in support of the hypothesis do not entitle us to assume that promiscuity has ever been the prevailing form of sexual relations among a single people, far less

that it has constituted a general stage in the social development of men, and, least of all, that such a stage formed the starting-point of all human history" (*Op. cit.*, p. 113).

And this verdict is now generally accepted. We can therefore conclude that the alleged historical facts are no disproof of the traditional teaching of the origin of marriage. Such customs, as far as they have existed, or do exist, have no evolutionary significance. On the contrary, they are signs and results of degeneration.

Another influence actually militating against marriage is the desire for a solidaric commonwealth latent in the thought of a strong Socialist school which finds its inspiration in the notion of solidarity contained in Plato's Republic. It is also held by this school that the wish to possess and transmit property originally led to the present institution of marriage, and rescinding from this particular conviction, it is easy to see the basis of the conflict of ideas between Socialist or Communist solidarity, and the domestic relation of the family. Perfect solidarity, according to Plato, exists when whatever affects any member of the State equally affects every other member. This is the ideal of individual unity. But since the philosopher recognized such unification to be impossible, he had to accept for his ideal the collective unity of the State family. This scheme Aristotle justly condemned as an excessive unification which would destroy at once the association of the State and that of the family.

In the circumstances of these conflicting claims of dangerous modern doctrines, it is the evident duty of

religion to re-affirm without compromise the old truths of revelation and reason concerning the meaning and origin of marriage in general, and especially to give clear and emphatic expression to the Christian ideal of the Sacrament. This duty the Catholic Church has always fulfilled; and she is as unflinching and unwearied to-day in her witness as she has ever been in her age-long struggle with the world.

CHAPTER IV

THE CATHOLIC IDEAL OF MARRIAGE

(II) DOCTRINAL WITNESS

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THE first facts the Church bears witness to are the sacredness of the contract of marriage, and its Divine institution. She accepts these doctrines because she finds them revealed in the Book of Genesis, and later confirmed by Christ and commended by His Apostles. Hence she teaches against all modernist heresy that in the beginning God made man from the slime of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life, and that at the same time He produced from his side the woman who was to be his companion. Thus "God created man to His own image, male and female created He them, and He blessed them and said: Increase and multiply and fill the earth." Thereby the Creator declared that one man and one woman should be the natural beginning of the human race, which must continue to be propagated by the intimate association of husband and wife till the end of time.

From this starting-point of revelation, Catholic theology goes on to unfold the meaning of marriage and to define in more detail its nature and purpose.

As regards the meaning of the term, a distinction is made between marriage *in fieri*, or in the making, and marriage in *facto esse*, or as made. The first is the contract between husband and wife ; the second is the conjugal union established by the contract. Between Christians the matrimonial contract, as will be shown later, is a Sacrament. Between non-Christians it has no supernatural virtue. Consequently the marriage contract may be regarded from a two-fold standpoint. Viewed as it is in itself, and apart from the Sacrament, it represents what marriage is in reality to those who are outside of the Christian Faith ; considered as having been raised to the dignity of a Sacrament, it shows a supernatural value, and answers to the Christian and Catholic ideal.

Thus, marriage in general is defined as—" A contract by which man and woman are permanently associated and united with one another as a common principle for the generation and education of children."

The employment of the passive voice can be taken to suggest the fact that the contracting parties are constituted one principle, not only by reason of their mutual consent, but also by the act of God, who intervenes to ratify and sanction the bond.

That the union is constituted by contract is implied by the nature of the joint relation, which is incomprehensible except as a free association based on mutual consent.

That the end which marriage as such seeks to obtain —*i.e.*, the end assigned to it by nature and the Creator— is the propagation of the human race by the procreation

and education of children, is contained in the very idea of marriage above enunciated ; it is also confirmed by the common sense of mankind, and by the fact of the differentiation of the sexes.

Moreover, the purpose of generation, properly attributed to marriage, is in reality the sole end and aim of the marriage contract. Other objects sought, such as mutual affection and support, lawful delights and a remedy for concupiscence, are not *per se* the objects or ends of marriage. When these are described as secondary ends, they must be understood to be essentially and absolutely subordinated to the true end of generation and education.

This is the well-founded view of Canon de Smet, who quotes Martin, a French authority, in support of it :

" The primary end of marriage . . . cannot be other than the generation and training up of children ; and therefore there cannot be other ends except such as are consequent on this, and are, as it were, necessary means whereby marriage may either simply or more expeditiously and more perfectly attain its primary end " (" Marriage and Betrothment," Vol. I, p. 80 *note*).

The permanent nature of the union of the two partners in marriage as a single principle of procreation and education follows naturally from this end. In the words of the French author just quoted :

" Since the child is one flesh with its father and mother, it ought to be loved and cherished as their own flesh by both of them conjointly, and so it is not only

to be brought to life in the first instance, but must also be led on and trained up to the preservation, increase and perfection of life, as it were by a continuous generation, not merely as a being of flesh, but as flesh animated by a rational soul and raised to the higher state of man" ("La crise du Marriage dans la Legislation intermediaire, 1789-1804," Vol. I, p. 6).

The same doctrine is confirmed by St. Thomas, as follows:

"It is manifest that in the human species, the mother alone could not suffice for the bringing up of the offspring, since the requirements of human life demand much that could not be provided by one alone. . . . Again, we must consider that in the human species, the offspring needs not merely nourishment for the body, as in the case of animals, but instruction for the mind as well; for the other animals have their natural instinct wherewith to provide for themselves, but man lives by reason, and must arrive at prudence through long experience. Hence it is necessary that children should be instructed by their parents who have already gained experience; nor are they capable of this instruction as soon as they are born, but only after a long time, and especially when they have come to the years of discretion. This education takes time, and, since the passions depreciate prudence, repression is called for as well as instruction. The mother alone is not equal to this, and the co-operation of the father, with greater intelligence to instruct and greater power to correct, is required. It is necessary, therefore, in the human species, that not a short time, as in the case

of birds, but a very considerable portion of life should be devoted to the development of the offspring. Thus, since it is necessary in the case of all animals that the mate should remain with the female as long as the welfare of the offspring requires it, it is natural in the case of man that this should be not for a brief period, but that the husband should have a lasting union with one and the same wife. This union we call marriage" ("Contra Gent." L. III, ch. 122).

From the above considerations the following important conclusions are derived:

First, marriage is indissoluble according to the natural law as well as according to the Divine positive law. This principle of indissolubility is interpreted by Catholic theology thus: Intrinsic dissolubility, in the sense of dissolubility from within by the operation of the individual wills of the parties, and therefore arbitrary, is opposed to the primary natural law; extrinsic dissolubility, or that which is dependent on external authority and restricted within certain limits, is contrary to the strictly prohibitive secondary natural law.

This division of the natural law into primary and secondary implies that it contains more important and less important kinds of precepts. The primary law admits of a further division into two classes or varieties of precepts. The object of the first of these comprises whatever directly destroys the relations which ought to exist between man and God, and thereby immediately opposes man's Divinely appointed end. The object of the second class includes all acts which of their nature

tend to upset the relations which are essential between men and necessary for the maintenance of the social order. Such acts are *mediately* opposed to the last end, inasmuch as that end cannot be obtained apart from human society.

Concerning acts contrary to either class of the primary precepts of the natural law, no exemption, at least by way of a general measure, can be made, and only in exceptional cases can an individual dispensation be granted by God.

This is the teaching of St. Thomas :

" It is in the power of God to dispense even from the primary precepts of the natural law . . . but such dispensations are not given to all in general, but rather to individuals, in a way analogous to that which is exemplified in the matter of miracles " (" Supplementum Q. Z. X.," VII, A. 2).

And Cardinal Billot, writing on the same subject, says :

" It is evident that acts which are contrary to the primary precepts admit of no general dispensation, granted to the whole community, so as to be regarded as an ordinary privilege . . . ; nevertheless there is no reason why in a particular and altogether exceptional case those acts should not be withdrawn by a Divine disposition from their natural condition, according to which they are contrary to the last end, so as to tend to God in a higher and, so to speak, miraculous manner outside of the order of second causes."

Opposed to the secondary precepts are acts which, while not calculated to destroy the social order and the

common good, are of a nature to damage or weaken these in the generality of cases. According as these acts are really injurious or merely less favourable, they are either forbidden or simply discountenanced by the secondary law of nature. To permit actions contrary to these secondary precepts, by way of general dispensation, is in the power of God ; but is in the power of God only, to whom it exclusively belongs to dispense from the law that He has made. When, therefore, the Church grants dispensations from certain obligations arising out of human acts connected with these secondary precepts of the natural law, she must be considered to be using not her own proper power, but simply to be exercising a ministerial or instrumental power specially delegated to her by God for the purpose.

That the arbitrary dissolubility of marriage, as taught by the advocates of "free love," is contrary to the primary natural law is sufficiently proved by the fact that it destroys the end of marriage, and thereby tends to ruin the family and society. This, however, does not strictly apply to the restricted dissolubility of legal divorce. For neither the essence of marriage nor its end requires *absolute* indissolubility. Thus, the generation and education of children would not be radically destroyed if it were permitted to dissolve marriage when the work of education had been completed. But nevertheless this restricted dissolubility is contrary to the secondary precepts of the natural law, because though it does not destroy, it yet tends in the generality of cases seriously to injure the marriage partnership.

The second of the general conclusions arises immediately out of the end of marriage, and is that only those who are in themselves capable of procreating children are capable of marriage. The exclusion of all others on the ground of impotence is in accordance with natural as well as with ecclesiastical law.

A final conclusion is that the intention of the contracting parties must at least negatively comply with the proper end of marriage. So that those who enter upon marriage under the condition either of preventing children by unlawful precautions, or of not using marriage, render the contract null and void. In both cases, however, to vitiate consent the condition must be a true condition, intrinsic to the contract, and not merely an external modification or an accessory of it. In the second case mentioned, if the intention of having no children does not form an integral part of the matrimonial compact, but is merely subjoined to it; though then the contract is not null, it is ordinarily sinful on the part of the contracting parties. This is the opinion of Canon de Smet, who, however, qualifies it thus: "This intention, nevertheless, may be legitimate if its direct object is the observance of continency, and childlessness follows indirectly and only as a consequence; it may even be an act of virtue and religious perfection if done through the love of chastity" (*Ibid.*).

For the greater perfection, therefore, of marriage, as such, the contract should be entered into with the positive and explicit intention of fulfilling the end for which it was instituted. For simple legality, however, conformity to this object in a negative way—that is,

to say, in a manner neither positively excluding nor positively including the intention of generation—is sufficient. In this hypothesis, since there is no positive conflict with either natural or Divine law, there is no moral offence. Hence, it is lawful and not sinful to contract marriage with the sole explicit, but not exclusive, object of avoiding poverty, of gaining affection and support, of allaying the passions, or of obtaining natural enjoyment. A further reason commonly given by theologians is that in the circumstances the act of generation is implicitly included, and thereby conformity of the matrimonial contract with its proper end is indirectly secured.

The correspondence of the definition of the meaning, origin and purpose of marriage given above with the narrative in Genesis of the express establishment by God of an association and union of the sexes for the propagation of the race is clearly intimated in the passage of the Gospel of St. Matthew, where, referring to the different sex of the partners, Christ says : " Have ye not read, that He who made man from the beginning, made then male and female ? . . . For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be in one flesh " (xix. 4-5).

That the union is constituted by contract is a natural deduction, seeing that such an association is unthinkable except as the result of a fully deliberate and voluntary agreement.

This idea of marriage is further approved by the commonsense of mankind, and perfectly accords with the lessons of experience and reason.

The matrimonial contract, therefore, besides being directly instituted by God, has its origin also in the natural law which not only dictates the propagation of the race by generation, but further prescribes the physical and moral education of children as the first duty of parents.

"Marriage," in the words of Canon de Smet, "is, then, a natural contract, since it is rooted in nature itself; but it is more than a mere secular contract. It is of itself, and quite independently of its sacramental dignity, a sacred and a religious contract. If we consider only its own distinctive qualities, this contract is sacred and religious, not essentially and intrinsically, but extrinsically—by reason of its Divine origin, of its religious significance, since from the beginning it symbolized the union of Christ with the Church, and also by reason of the end for which it is ordained" ("Betrothment and Marriage," Vol. I, p. 72).

Accordingly, the Church, in her witness to the Christian ideal of marriage, further insists that the formation of Adam and Eve had a higher significance than the mere multiplication of the race. From the beginning the wedlock of man and woman foreshadowed the Divine mystery of the Incarnation, and was a type and prophesy of the union of Christ with His Church. As Eve was taken from the side of Adam in sleep, to become the Mother of all living, so was the Church taken from the side of Christ as He slept on the Cross, to become His Spouse and the Mother of all to whom He came to give life. Because of this, marriage became a sacred sign, even carrying the high purpose of peopling

Heaven with saints. For the same reason marriage manifested also from the commencement the most excellent properties of love—oneness and endurance till death. "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be in one flesh. Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

How sadly this ideal deteriorated is matter of history. The commencement of the corruption appeared amidst the heathen, and spread later to the Jewish race. For even in the midst of the chosen people the custom for a man to have more than one wife came to be accounted lawful; and eventually, "by reason of the hardness of their heart," Moses permitted divorce. Still God did not cease to direct His people, and the most wondrous love song of the love of one bridegroom for one bride till death was inspired by the Holy Ghost and given to Israel to maintain the great ideal: "One is my dove, my perfect one is but one. . . . Put me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm, for love is strong as death. . . . My beloved to me and I to him who feedeth among the lilies, till the day break and the shadows flee away." It was in remembrance of this that the young Tobias said to his wife Sara: "Arise and let us pray to God to-day, and to-morrow, and the next day; because for these three nights we are joined to God: and when the third night is over we will be in our own wedlock: for we are the children of saints, and we must not be joined together like heathens that know not God." And it was for this reason that

he prayed for a blessing on his marriage, thus: "Thou madest Adam of the slime of the earth, and gavest him Eve for a helper. And now, O Lord, Thou knowest that not for fleshly lust do I take my sister to wife, but only for the love of posterity, in which Thy Name may be blessed for ever and ever." And Sara prayed with him: "Have mercy on us, and let us grow old both together in health."

But a still greater havoc of change and corruption afflicted the Gentiles, amongst whom whole nations appear almost to have forgotten the true notion and origin of marriage. Plurality of husbands and wives led to almost unlimited divorce; and all this was accompanied by the greatest confusion as to the natural rights and duties of husbands and wives, and parents and children.

St. Jerome describes the dominion assumed over woman by man at this time. The husband might dismiss his wife without any just cause. At the same time he was himself at liberty "to run headlong with impunity into lust, unbridled and unrestrained, in houses of ill-fame and amongst his female slaves, as if the dignity of the person sinned with, and not the will of the sinner, made the guilt." The licentiousness of the times degraded woman so low as to cause her to be regarded merely as a means for the gratification of passion, or for the production of offspring. Marriageable women were bought and sold as merchandise. Of necessity, the offspring of such marriages were either reckoned stock-in-trade of the community, or held to be the property of the father of the family, who was permitted by law

to make and unmake the marriages of his children at will, and even to exercise over them the monstrous power of life and death.

Then, "in the fullness of time," an alleviation and a remedy were bestowed from on high. Jesus Christ came into the world and restored marriage to its original dignity, and even raised it to the supernatural plane of a Sacrament. From that time it became a more perfect figure of the Incarnation and the Church. Through the union of the Godhead and the Manhood, Christ was filled with grace and knowledge. Through the union of Christ with the Church, the Church is sanctified as His one perfect and unspotted bride. So likewise, through the union of man and woman in the Sacrament of Marriage, there are conferred on them all the graces required to enable them to carry out the arduous duties of their state. "Husbands," says St. Paul, "love your wives as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life. . . . So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. For no man ever hateth his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the Church. Because we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great Sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the Church." (Eph. v. 25-32).

True, the expression of St. Paul in this text cannot be said directly to convey the meaning of the word

"Sacrament" as we use it; yet it implies that idea. It describes marriage as a sacred sign, showing a substantial resemblance to the mystical union of Christ and the Church. But if this likeness exists, and marriage is truly an image of the Incarnation and the espousal of Christ with His Church, then the contract of marriage must be a Sacrament in the strict sense of the word. For the union of Christ and the Church is a union of sanctifying grace accompanied with a guarantee of actual graces whereby the Church will be enabled to fulfil her supernatural mission to the end. Christian marriage, therefore, to resemble this union, must likewise be a sign and cause of grace through Christ, for those who enter upon it to fulfil their state to the end. Therefore the bond or contract of marriage satisfies all the requirements of a Sacrament. It is a sacred sign instituted by Christ to confer grace. It is a Sacrament of the New Law.

Pope Leo XIII, in his Encyclical on Christian Marriage, clearly sets forth this fact of Catholic teaching: "Marriage is a Sacrament because it is a holy sign which gives grace, showing forth an image of the mystical nuptials of Christ with the Church. But the form and image of these nuptials is shown precisely by the very bond of that most close union in which man and woman are bound together in one; which Bond is nothing else but the Marriage itself. Hence it is clear that among Christians every true marriage is, in itself and by itself, a Sacrament; and that nothing can be further from the truth than to say that the Sacrament is a certain added ornament, or outward endowment,

which can be separated and torn away from the contract. . . . A distinction, or rather severance, of this kind cannot be allowed. For it is certain that in Christian Marriage the contract is inseparable from the Sacrament; and that for this reason, the contract cannot be true and legitimate without being a Sacrament as well. For Christ our Lord added to marriage the dignity of a Sacrament; but marriage is the contract itself, whenever that contract is lawfully concluded."

For these reasons the Church, as the Divinely appointed interpreter of the Divine Law, and the custodian of the Sacraments, claims sole and supreme jurisdiction over Christian marriage. This jurisdiction, though supreme, is limited. The Church cannot effect or change the substance of marriage. The sacramental contract, validly made and consummated, remains immutable till death. The power of the Church is confined to interpreting and applying the law, and to determining the conditions required for a valid and binding contract. This power is very necessary for the temporal and spiritual well-being of the individual and of society. A further function of the Church, directly imposed on her by Christ, is to safeguard the Sacrament by the defence of moral teaching and canonical legislation. This function, accordingly, she also claims to discharge with sovereign independence, and by Divine right. Still, she admits the collateral right of the State to take cognisance of certain civil effects of marriage. Hence the practice of the Church has always been to favour the reasonable requirements of the State for the marriages of its citizens, and to

co-operate with the secular authority in all legislation which is for the common good, and in keeping with the dignity and Divine purpose of marriage. To immoral laws, however, and to enactments inimical to religion and derogatory to the sanctity of marriage, she absolutely refuses to allow her children to submit.

It also follows from the inseparability of the Sacrament from the contract of matrimony, that the parties to the contract, and not the priest, who is merely the witness, are the ministers of the Sacrament. By giving themselves one to the other, to live together till death, they effect the sacred sign of the Sacrament—the delivery of Himself by Christ to His Church to sanctify her in His love for ever. And not only do they make the Sacrament, but they also minister its grace to each other, and mutually confer on either soul the spiritual beauties and adornments appropriate to the heavenly image. The woman, as God's minister, confers on the man the dignity of the figure of Christ, the Bridegroom of the Church. The man, in like manner, confers on the woman the purity and loveliness of the Church, the bride of Christ. Thus husband and wife complete one another as well in the supernatural as in the natural order. And the substance of this achieved relationship is the abiding love of Christ, the Redeemer.

In conclusion, the Catholic ideal of marriage, which is the Christian conception preserved and guarded through the ages by the Catholic faith, is the symbolism, according to the intention of the Creator, of the union of Christ with the mystical body of His spouse the Church. In this symbolism Eve, issuing

from the side of Adam in sleep, is a figure of the Church issuing from the side of Christ, the second Adam, dead upon the Cross. Likewise, Adam joined to his wife, so as to constitute with her a single principle for the generation and education of children, is a figure of the same Christ united with the Church, that men may be born again to the new life and perfected therein by the joint action of the one supernatural principle. Nor is the symbolism without practical lessons. As Christ is the head of His mystical body, so in married life precedence belongs to the husband over his wife, and the husband is the head of the family. Hence in matters concerning the family as a whole, the wife owes conjugal obedience to her husband. Of the nature of this obedience it is only necessary to say that it is as much raised above the filial obedience of sons as the filial obedience of sons is raised above the servile obedience of slaves. It is far from absolute, and it must always be founded on love. Again, as Christ by His Incarnation was one in the bond of nature with the members of His Church, so husband and wife united in one flesh are equal in dignity and should show sympathy and respect for one another. Finally, as Christ loved and delivered Himself up for the Church, so must the husband love his wife, and be ready to make sacrifice for her. And this love of her husband must be reciprocated by his wife. This is the Catholic ideal of marriage. Could any conception be higher, more helpful or beautiful? The world to-day would do well to consider it.

CHAPTER V

FAILURE AND FALLACY OF DIVORCE

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MANY advocates of the new morality, faced with the immediate impossibility of introducing either "free union" or "free love," have begun to turn their attention to the half-way measure of free marriage. To secure this they are endeavouring to facilitate divorce, and make it readily obtainable even at the will of only one of the parties. The patrons of the German school known as the "Neue Ethik" write frankly in this sense. According to them, love alone rules and regulates marriage. As long as love, which is the intimate union of hearts, endures, the outward conjugal union which expresses it will endure spontaneously; but when love ceases, the only remedy is to break the marriage tie, which has now become the sanction of an abnormal and immoral relation, and a bond of spiritual servitude. Fed on this sort of propaganda, and on immoral novels and plays, the current of popular opinion tends to follow the same direction, to condone divorce and to deprecate or suspect marriage. One result is that the question is often seriously asked, "Is marriage a failure?" Such a question ought to

be impossible, especially in a Christian country. There is only one answer to it: marriage cannot be a failure. Concubinage, polygamy, promiscuity, "free love"—all these are failures, ghastly disasters. But marriage, the highest expression of human love, the Sacrament of Christ's institution, can only be a success. It would be as logical to suggest the failure of nature, or the failure of Christianity, as to suggest the failure of marriage. That many married men and women make shipwreck of their lives and incur disaster is obvious. But it should be equally obvious that all such post-matrimonial tragedies are properly the failures of love in the individual, and ought not to be placed at the door of marriage. Bankruptcies are of common occurrence in commerce, but no one with any knowledge of business would think, on that account, of questioning the fundamental system of trade. People do not ask, "Is commerce a failure?" They are content to assert that incompetence and dishonesty in trade do not pay. In regard to marriage, we are apt to forget that it is a moral value—a vow, not a vision—and that its success depends on fidelity rather than on physical enjoyment or happiness. Marriage is "for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in health or in sickness, till death do us part." Therefore, though marriage may turn to joy or sorrow, it can never fail while love is true.

But if the question were asked, "Is divorce a failure?" the answer "Yes" would have to be given, not only by Christians, but by all who accept the verdict of reason, experience and history. The argument from

reason rests on the fact that the indissoluble union of one man with one woman is the true ideal of love, and natural to man from the commencement. The truth of the ideal is vouched for by its correspondence with the spiritual nature of love, which is ever striving to disengage itself from transient sense objects, and to become enamoured of immaterial spiritual beauties, over which time, space, and the forces of nature can have no dominion. This impulse expresses itself in the desire of all true lovers to effect a complete union of will on the basis of the soul and of character. "Let us allow what is perishable to pass away, and let us love each other for ever," is the familiar exclamation of love, come down through the ages. It is the echo of the cry of the first marriage of Eden. Therefore, divorce, which unmakes this perfect union, and frustrates the natural desire of love, must be a failure.

History, which shows that the practice of divorce in past ages has always tended to produce moral corruption and the disintegration of family life and society, proves the same conclusion. The familiar classical example is taken from the rise and fall of Rome. In the first 500 years of the history of the Republic there is no record of a single divorce. In those days the husband, styled "paterfamilias," was the priest of the domestic altar. On him rested the responsibility of perpetuating the family and preserving pure the sacred fires of the hearth. The wife, with the title of "materfamilias," had the place of honour next her husband, and shared his duties. The greeting she pronounced on entering the household,

" Ubi tu Caius, ego Caia," showed that if the Roman matron was not equal in power, she was at least equal in dignity with her husband. That was the golden age of the family and of the City. But towards the end of the Republic divorce began to be practised, and later, under the Empire, the system became gradually easier, until it resolved itself into a purely private matter of arrangement. At length the disorder became universal, and marriage practically ceased to exist, having given place to free union, dissoluble at the will of the parties. The disintegration and immorality that accompanied this change are well known. Seneca said of his time that marriage was contracted to give piquancy to adultery, and many other pagan writers castigated the connubial infidelities and other even grosser vices of the day. Since then the general moral degeneracy spread from Rome through Italy, and produced the spiritual decline of the first three centuries of the Empire, which led to its material collapse.

Present-day experience points the same lesson. In every country where divorce has been introduced we see evidences of the tendency of the system to corrupt morals and to extend more and more in the direction of free union and " free love."

In France divorce was introduced in 1792, and since then (except the period of a little more than half a century after the fall of Napoleon and the return of the Bourbons) it has been rendered ever more accessible by legislative concessions. Marriage is regarded as a purely civil contract, and is regulated by the Civil Code. Any grave injury contrary to the obligations

laid down in the Code is a sufficient ground for divorce. In Belgium, where the Napoleonic Code has remained unchanged, divorce by consent has always been, and is still, in force. In both countries the number of divorces has increased from year to year. In France, on an average, over 10,000 divorces are stated to be pronounced annually ; in Germany, over 13,000 ; and in the United States of America, where the number of divorces is the highest of any civilized country, with the single exception of Japan, the annual average is said to considerably exceed 60,000. Statistics further go to show a rapid increase of the divorce rate in the United States in recent years. The rate per 100,000 population actually increased from 29 in 1870 to 82 in 1905. In the former year there was one divorce for every 3,441 persons, and in the latter year one for every 1,218. The rate per 100,000 *married* population was 81 in the year 1870, and 200 in the year 1900. This comparison, taken from the Catholic Encyclopaedia, indicates that divorce is at present two and a half times as common compared with married population as it was forty years ago—a rate much higher than in any of the other countries of which statistics have been obtained.

All this is the logical consequence that the defenders of indissoluble monogamy advance against the advocates of divorce : it is also the real goal that the marriage reformers aim at. Many frankly admit it. Thus Naquet, through whose instrumentality divorce was reintroduced into France in 1884, bluntly avows that free union and " free love " are the ideals to be aimed

at. In the columns of the *Journal* of June 8th, 1908, he wrote : " Je suis convaincu que nous marchons vers 'lunion libre, c-a-d., vers l'abandon de toutes les formalités administratives et de toutes les entraves judiciaires qui obstruent à cette heure les portes d'entrée et de sortie du mariage."

But this breaking up of marriage and the family is not the only injury being done to society by divorce. In addition to the violation of the nuptial law, it is producing further widespread immorality. As the Italian infidel writer Morselli points out in his book, " Per la Polemica sul Divorcio," published in Genoa in 1903, crimes of every kind, including murders, suicide, prostitution and abortion, are increasing in proportion to the number of divorces. His view is confirmed by many other writers on the subject. " La statistique ascendante des divorces est le thermomètre de la moralité " is the significant statement of the socialist newspaper *Vooruit,* as given in the *Patriote* of December 31st, 1904. And Jacquart, in his " Essais de statistique morale—Le Divorce et La Séparation de Corps," Brussels, 1909, comparing the frequency of divorce with that of suicide, and also with the falling off of legitimate births, says : " On constate que la fréquence du divorce coincide dans l'ensemble avec un taux élevé de suicide et une faible natalité." A remarkable illustration of the association of crime with divorce is contained in the fact that in the United States of America, where, as we have seen, the divorce rate is highest, the rate of crimes of violence, especially murder and suicide, is also the maximum.

That the disorder in the world to-day is, notwithstanding all that has been said, distinctly below that of former civilizations, while being a cause for some reassurance, should not remove apprehension. The result, as far as it goes, is due to the restraining influence of religion which still prevails and continues to make itself felt. The inherent danger, however, is no less on this account, but rather greater, since the decline of an established Christian civilization from a higher moral and spiritual eminence involves in the end a still more terrible crash, and a vastly greater catastrophe. It is no exaggeration to say that the present menace of divorce to our modern civilization, though neglected, is vastly more real than the dreaded peril of war.

What is the situation in our own country? Generally speaking, though foreboding and critical, it is not without hope. For a just appreciation, it needs to be reviewed in the light of the past. The outstanding cardinal fact is that England in the earliest days of her history favoured the Catholic conception of marriage, and shaped her laws in accordance with the mind of the Church. What the mind of the Church is, and always has been, is the simple reflection of the principles enunciated by Christ and taught by His Apostles. Marriage is not a mere civil contract between two persons. God enters into it. It is a Divine ordinance. It is one and indivisible. It is a Sacrament of Grace. It cannot be altered by man. The authority of the State is powerless before it. On the basis of these principles the Church has built up her Canon Law for the regulation of marriage. This law allows of no

divorce in the case of the valid marriage of Christians after it has been completed or consummated. The bond made by God cannot be broken by man. Though the parties thus united may be allowed for just causes to separate, they can never thereby acquire the freedom to marry again. And in this obligation there is no distinction admitted between the innocent and the guilty party. Both are equally bound by the contract.

These principles, early embodied in the common law of England, under which originally all jurisdiction in regard to marriage was confined to the ecclesiastical courts, led to a close practical agreement in administration, as well as to a substantial similarity between the laws of the Church and State. This legal tradition, which long prevailed, and is not yet fully lost, has been the saving grace of our English home life, and is no doubt accountable in a large measure for the comparatively high level of domestic purity which has generally distinguished the country, and is still part of its heritage.

Actually, until the year 1857, with the exception since 1551 of a provision for divorce to be obtained through special Acts of Parliament, there was practically only one marriage law in England—the law of the Church accepted and carried out by the State. The first great break came at the passing of the Matrimonial Clauses Act in 1857, which act gave power to a new Civil Court to grant divorce for adultery on the part of the wife, and adultery and cruelty on the part of the husband, with permission to both parties to re-marry.

In 1859, Lord Campbell, the President of the Commission which recommended the new law, said :

" I have been sitting two days in the Divorce Court, and I am afraid of the monster I have called into existence. There are now 300 cases of divorce pending. This is rather appalling. . . . There seems some reason to dread that the prophecies of those who opposed the change may be fulfilled by a lamentable multiplication of divorces and by the corruption of public morals " (" Life of Lord Campbell," 2nd Edition, Vol. II, p. 361).

That Lord Campbell's fear was well founded is shown by the large increase in the number of divorces, and the recent development of sexual crime in the youth of the country. In 1858, one year after the Act was passed, 326 divorces were granted. Ten years later the number doubled, and stayed at between 600 and 700 until the period succeeding the war. Since then an unprecedented demand has arisen from thousands of couples, all claiming freedom from marriages which have come to disaster.

In 1918, 1,082 dissolutions of marriage were registered ; in 1919 there were 1,629 ; in 1920 the numbers swelled to 3,040 ; and in 1921 there was a further increase to 3,458. This growing demand for divorce, which shows no sign of diminishing in the future, can no longer be attributed to the war. To what, then, is it attributable ? The chief cause, after the Act itself of 1857, is undoubtedly the poisonous propaganda, carried on since two generations, in the name of freedom and sex psychology, to bring about further facilities for divorce.

The demand is being promoted, through a highly organized agitation, by a small but influential school of thinkers, comprising Rationalists, Socialists, and Liberal Protestants. It is supported by plausible arguments, and appears to proceed from conviction. A further secret of its influence lies in the fact that it refrains from the appeal to licentiousness, which is common in other countries, and makes no open attack on marriage. So far the cause of the agitators has not been endorsed by the nation as a whole. On the contrary, the sentiment of the vast majority in the country, which still confusedly clings to the old tradition of domestic purity and family life, has opposed the movement. But the resistance of the majority has been inadequate, principally for two reasons: it has been too passive, and it has failed to be founded on grounds of faith or settled conviction. The net result is that the "marriage reformers" have already met with considerable success, and are steadily increasing in power. As a result of the agitation, a Royal Commission on Divorce and Matrimonial Causes was called into being by Parliament in 1909 to advise on the extension of facilities and causes for divorce. The Commission was presided over by the late Lord Gorell, and in 1910 returned the two famous Majority and Minority Reports. The confused state of opinion in the country is reflected in the preamble of these two reports, in which the Commissioners agree in stating that from the evidence given before them by a large number of representative scholars and theologians, it appeared that "on the main question as to dissolubility of marriage there are wide

and sharp differences of opinion, each of the following different principles having been maintained as arising from the scriptural material available :

" 1. That Christian marriages are indissoluble.

" 2. That all marriages are indissoluble.

" 3. That marriage is dissoluble on the ground of adultery.

" 4. That marriage is dissoluble on the grounds of (*a*) adultery and (*b*) desertion.

" 5. That marriage is dissoluble on other serious grounds based upon the needs of human life."

" The Commission, therefore, state that they are unable to find any general consensus of Christian opinion which would preclude the questions set out in their Report from being freely considered " ; and they add that " in view of the conflict of opinion which has existed in all ages and in all branches of the Christian Church, among scholars and divines equally qualified to judge ; and the fact that the State must deal with all its citizens, whether Christian, nominally Christian, or non-Christian ; our conclusion is that we must proceed to recommend the Legislature to act upon an unfettered consideration of what is best for the interest of the State, society, and morality, and for that of parties to suits, and their families."

The Commissioners, moreover, came to the conclusion that their Report " should proceed upon the basis that the State should not regard the marriage tie as necessarily indissoluble in its nature ; but regarding the dissolubility of the tie as not limited to the ground of adultery, may allow other grave causes."

The agreed basis of the two Reports is, therefore, the doctrine of the dissolubility of marriage ; and this is combined with the assumption that marriage is an ordinary human and civil contract, and, consequently, subject in all things to the enactments and dispensations of the State.

The Majority Report included in its recommendations the following relaxations, in favour of which a prolonged agitation had been maintained :

1. That increased facilities for obtaining divorce should be granted, in order that its advantages may be within the reach of the poor as well as of the rich and the middle classes.

2. That the right of divorce should be extended to women upon the same terms as to men ; and

3. That the causes of divorce should be increased so as to include the following five new grounds—desertion, persistent and aggravated cruelty, insanity, habitual drunkenness, and imprisonment under a commuted life sentence.

The last of these recommendations assumes that divorce is rather a remedy than a source of moral disease and corruption. The second was endorsed by the House of Commons as recently as June 8th, 1923, when it passed the Equality Divorce Bill with a big majority : hence the Bill is now an Act of Parliament.

The Minority Report, which was signed by the Archbishop of York and two other Commissioners representing the Church of England, opposed any extension of the existing grounds of divorce. S.nce then at least three abortive attempts have been made to promote

legislation on the basis of the Majority Report. The most notable of these attempts was made by Lord Buckmaster, who introduced a Bill to facilitate divorce in 1920. This Bill, though sponsored by the Bishop of Durham, was opposed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the other Anglican Bishops in Parliament. Thanks to their opposition, and a storm of indignant protest throughout the country, the Bill was dropped. The same fate attended a second Bill of Lord Buckmaster in May, 1921.

But though thwarted from time to time, the agitation in favour of easier divorce continues strong and successful. If it has not effected a change in the law, it has gone far in preparing the way. Already much of the original opposition with which divorce propaganda was faced has ceased to be operative, the public conscience having gradually dulled to the perception of the mischief. The consequent lowering of the tone of morality in the country has already been referred to ; and the gradual depreciation of marriage is another effect of which there is no lack of evidence. It is witnessed especially in the rapid multiplication of suits for divorce and separation. In the past year new Courts have had to be opened for the trial of divorce cases, which are now taken at the Assizes ; and several additional Judges have had to be appointed to cope with the work. The hustle of these cases is notorious, and the hearing of many of them is merely formal, and occupies less than ten minutes. We have been accustomed to reading in the papers headlines describing " Divorce while you wait," " Race with Unhappiness," and the like. Of late also

the Police Courts have been inundated with petitions of wives to be separated from their husbands, and queues of women are frequently to be seen waiting to apply for summonses. This last-mentioned ominous sign is intimately associated with the new attitude of society towards the rights of women to property, and the recognition of their capacity to earn their own living in many vocations heretofore closed to them. The legal fiction that the identity of the woman was merged in that of her husband has given place to a growing recognition of her individuality in all the relations of life—a new phase which is weakening the dependence of women upon their husbands and altering the conception of the family relation.

The failure of divorce in our country is also seen in the literature and drama of the day, which indicate that marriage is ceasing to be regarded as a permanent state of happiness. The most frequent theme of the modern play and novel, as in the plays and novels of the past, is married life. But whereas in former days our English novels ended with marriage and happiness, now they more usually commence with marriage and misery, and end with divorce and adultery.

All this is deplorable, and the conviction that it is due in the main to confused mentality rather than to wrong-heartedness is small ground for comfort. A great nation representing a high civilization with its roots in ancient Christian tradition cannot afford for any reason to renounce its trust. *Noblesse oblige.* If the British Empire, with its predominance of control

n the councils of the world, fails, the days of its influence are numbered and its doom is sealed.

The boasted remedy of marriage by divorce is, therefore, a failure. It has failed in the past. Its failure is no less apparent in the present. The fact could not be otherwise. How can marriage be remedied by divorce? Marriage is faithful love, divorce is selfish desertion. Marriage is a permanent relation—one flesh, one life. Divorce is a sword of separation which can sever and destroy, but never heal or unite. You cannot build on a shattered love. All relationship is abiding. A son is a son, a brother a brother—whether good or bad—always. It is the same with marriage. The failure and fallacy of divorce are one and identical. The error is a colossal calamity for religion and for civilization.

That there are economic and other conditions at the present time which make marriage less desirable and more difficult cannot for a moment be denied. But the solution of the problem can never be in weakness or in concession to purely natural indulgence. On the contrary, it must be sought in the strengthening of moral discipline and in the renewal of spiritual character. The public conscience needs to be re-awakened to the individual and social value of the old virile virtues of love of home, of duty and sacrifice. These, in fact, are the inward reality of the Christian idea of indissoluble marriage.

Before concluding it will be well to anticipate some of the more common objections which are expressed or implied against the established doctrine in the popular

understanding of the case for divorce. They are contained in such statements as the following :

" Marriage is for man, not man for marriage. It must not be allowed to be the enemy of freedom or happiness for either the man or the woman. It ought to provide for the happiness and welfare of the whole family, and the test of human happiness and national prosperity must be applied to it."

True : and all this, as has been shown, holds of Christian marriage. But it is falsified in the terminable contracts and leasehold marriages advocated by the votaries of divorce. Marriage properly consists in an altruistic relation on which the happiness of families and the well being of society and nations depend. But this relation can exist only with a true and abiding love. Such love in the generality of cases is secured only by indissoluble marriage. Moreover, the Christian teaching on this subject, by enforcing personality and character, is a powerful prop to civilization and a strong stimulus for national and human progress.

Again, it is objected :

" Marriage should secure the fullest measure of self-realization and provide against untoward contingencies in the future. Therefore the true interests of the parties must not be hazarded in respect of the future by a bond which admits no possibility of release."

The answer to this objection is contained in a clearer understanding of the true interests of men and women in the state of wedlock. These interests are not the conflicting and selfish interests of entirely separate individuals. Their highest interests are identical,

and they are essentially dependent on the marriage bond.

" But is the individual to be sacrificed and deprived of happiness because, through no fault of his or hers, marriage has proved a failure ? And is the family to be subjected to the cruel experience and evil example of quarrelling and loveless parents to maintain a mere theoretical bond ?" This is the most common objection raised by the propagandists of divorce. It consists in exciting compassion for the innocent party, the unhappy victim of a cruel fate.

In answering this objection, it must be admitted at the outset that hard cases do from time to time occur. But these cases are exceptional, and the natural law does not cease on account of exceptional individual severities. Its object, which is the general good founded on the nature of things, necessarily takes precedence of individual happiness. It is surely better that isolated cases of unhappy families should continue than that countenance should be given to a principle which would injure the happiness of the race and drain the sources of the joys of marriage and of the sweetnesses of home. Besides, there is the alleviation in cases of dire necessity of separation, which, though deplored by the Church, is tolerated as a lesser evil than divorce. This partial remedy admits of a reconciliation, which not infrequently follows, and has the further advantage of providing for the care of the children.

The theory of the reform of marriage through divorce legislation corresponds to a restricted and particular

view of life which refuses to gauge the universal good by the happiness of the many, and is incapable of seeing in individual and immediate sacrifice the necessary price of the permanent welfare of the race. Wise legislation has regard to the effect of enactments on the people as a whole, rather than hard and exceptional cases. The standard is not the level of the lowest, but that of the highest and noblest. It should be in accordance with man at his best. As regards these conditions, divorce legislation not only fails to fulfil them, but, by going against the natural law, it inflicts a serious positive injury on the whole of society. Nature's law ordains life committal for man and woman as the proper accompaniment of marriage. Even the most restricted application of divorce is a serious injury to that partnership. Outside of strict indissolubility, the stability of the union between husband and wife and their mutual love and fidelity are shaken ; the dignity of the wife and the education of the children suffer, and the end of marriage is rendered, if not wholly, at least wellnigh impossible. This is the most lenient statement of the offence of divorce legislation against the natural law. It presupposes the restriction of the system within the narrowest limits, and its confinement to the hardest and most exceptional cases. But this would not be so in practice. No merely human power, as experience has proved, is capable of restricting divorce within these narrow limits. Taking into consideration the inconstancy of man's heart, his inordinate desires, and his aversion to trouble and difficulties, the power of granting divorce would inevitably extend more

and more until it ended in free union, " free love " and the suppression of all permanent marriage. Thus what was originally an offence against the secondary natural law is seen to become an offence against the primary law, involving the ruin of married life and of the family.

In conclusion, the suggested remedy of divorce for the evils incidental to some marriages is no remedy ; and not only is it no remedy, it is in itself *the worst possible evil.*

Divorce, and especially easy divorce, is an inexcusable wrong. It is a debased, sinful and degrading ideal. The system is a bane to any nation, a danger to the home, a curse to society, a hideous evil for men, and a more monstrous evil for women.

CHAPTER VI

NEO-MALTHUSIANISM

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THE following brief sketch of the modern movement to restrict population and to limit families is offered by way of introduction to the subject next to be dealt with—voluntary and artificial birth control. By placing the new teaching in its historical setting, it is hoped to provide the conditions of a truer perspective.

The principle of restriction of population, as the basis of a theory of politico-economic progress, dates its origin from the commencement of the nineteenth century. Previously to that time the contrary idea prevailed, and the constant desire was for increase and not decrease of the population. Accordingly, early marriages and large families were encouraged. The view rested on the general harmony which was recognized to exist between population and the means of subsistence. On the religious side, also, it was believed that God would provide for those who came into the world in accordance with His law, and that there was a place for all the children of men at the banquet of life. But this old-established view was sadly shaken by "An Essay on the Principle of Population," by Thomas Robert Malthus, which first appeared in 1789. The

theory expounded was that population always tends to increase faster than subsistence, and so to outstrip it. Such a proposition, coming at the moment when political economy was faced with the problem of adjusting the means of subsistence to an extraordinary progressive increase of the population, due to the colossal change of the industrial era, naturally produced widespread alarm, the grounds for which were, fortunately, later disproved. "Over Population" meetings were held throughout the country, and the cry, first raised in Greece 2,000 years previously, that "the world will soon be too full of people," was repeated everywhere by the highbrow pessimists of the time. Meanwhile Malthus' book went through several editions, and continued to exercise a remarkable influence on economics, as well as on social legislation, during the first half of the nineteenth century.

The author of this remarkable book was a scholarly and well-meaning clergyman of the Church of England, and the object he placed before himself in his treatise was praiseworthy. It was to discover the relation between increase of population and means of subsistence, and to establish the modes by which the level between these two terms could best be effected. He set out by affirming that while population, if unimpeded and left to itself, increases in geometrical proportion, the means of subsistence, even under the most favourable productive conditions, cannot increase in more than an arithmetical series. Thus he asserted that the human race would increase as 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, etc., and the food supply only as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc. This

exact mathematical formula, however, he presently abandoned, and subsequently contented himself with the general proposition that population tends always to increase faster than sustenance, and so to outstrip it. This, according to Malthus, is the essential principle of population. But the principle is not always allowed to work itself out in practice, being held in check by powerful preventive and repressive obstacles. These in the past had been disease, war and famine, vice and misery. But if men were wise they would prevent and forestall these cruel cataclysmal and immoral checks. To this end, Malthus propounded a variety of recommendations, of which the chief was "*moral* restraint." He was a highly moral man himself, and he laid down the strict obligation that no one should marry who was unable to rear a family properly. "You have no right," he said, "to accept the responsibilities of marriage until you have the means to fulfil them. You must not run the risk of offspring which you cannot maintain."

Clearly this advice was not altogether wanting in wisdom. As a counsel it was unexceptionable. But the strict obligation it imposed was excessive. It involved the duty of celibacy on a multitude of persons who were quite unable to exercise that virtue. Accordingly, it has led, as we shall see, to evil results.

Moreover, the principle on which Malthus based the duty of "*moral* restraint" and which has since been adopted as the basis of "*artificial* restraint"—namely, that population necessarily tends to outstrip and press on subsistence—was a false assumption. Of course,

population in certain circumstances *may* exceed subsistence; but that it *must*, and always does so, is contrary to the testimony of facts. Malthus' principle was almost immediately disproved. In 1800 the population of Europe, according to Professor J. Arthur Thomson, was about 187 millions. By 1850 it had risen to 266 millions, and by 1900 it was 400 millions. The rate of increase in England and Wales was greatest of all. In these two countries the population was more than trebled, rising from 12 millions in 1789 to 38 millions in 1890. In no part of this period of phenomenal increase of population was there any lagging behind of the means of subsistence. On the contrary, accelerated production far outstripped the growth of population, and not only the necessaries of life, but luxuries also multiplied out of all proportion to the numbers of the people, thus reducing the theory of Malthus and the Malthusians to confusion.

The fact that in many countries of Europe to-day millions are suffering dire distress, or even living on the verge of starvation, is no disproof of what has been said. In the same countries the rich classes are enjoying a superabundance. The explanation must be sought in other causes than the poverty of nature or the limits of man's productive capacity. War, avarice, international rivalry, lack of organization, are amongst the causes which should be mentioned. Nature is rich and bountiful, and what is wanting in one country can be supplied by another through exchange and transport. The continent of America alone, it has been stated, under intensive cultivation, could provide more than

sufficient cereals for the whole of the world. Moreover, the machinery of production and transport is improving from day to day, and the capacity of human inventiveness is indefinite. To such capacity it is impossible to oppose the limits of "diminishing returns." If men would only use, according to the design of God, the qualities of mind and heart which He has given them, peace and plenty would be the lot, not only of the few, but of all.

The problem of the nations to-day, therefore, is not the pressure of population on production, but of production on population—a problem which must be met by some mitigation of the burdens of labour, by a fairer distribution of work and wages, and by an improvement in international exchange and currency. These results can only be hoped for by the nations combining in some constructive effort to reduce the present system of competition and tariffs within the limits prescribed by justice and charity. Until now no concerted effort worthy of the name has been made.

In England the economic situation has not materially altered since last century. Notwithstanding the reduction of wages owing to the growth of international competition, the standard of living is still very much higher than in the pre-industrial period.

The commerce of the country also, in normal conditions, continues to show a capacity of indefinite expansion, and gives promise of being able to maintain a vastly increased population. From the imperial standpoint, the fulfilment of these possibilities can only be interpreted as a peremptory need. Unless many more

millions of the Home stock are forthcoming to exploit and defend the overseas Dominions, our vast, and till now almost untouched resources of Empire, will inevitably fall a prey to more prolific neighbouring peoples. Japan and China are an immediate menace to the Dominions of Australia and New Zealand, and even the Bantu and other black races may be regarded as constituting a potential threat to our African possessions.

The critical position of India and of Canada is no less obvious.

As regards the danger of distress or actual starvation in England from continued unemployment, this is not an immediate problem of growth of population. It is the direct result of a recent development of industrial discontent, and properly represents a problem of the temper and conditions of labour. There is no disguising the fact that the British worker of to-day is dissatisfied with the relation of wages to output, and is at the moment either unable or unwilling to recognize that this relation must have some proportion to the general standard actually prevailing in the other countries of the world. Mr. Lloyd George, in a recent electioneering address, referred to the comparative wages of workmen in the various capitals of Europe. He based his estimates on the returns of a Board of Trade inquiry, as reported in the *Labour Gazette* for March, 1923: "This is how it stands. Put London at 100. Brussels was 70; that is, the wages of the Brussels worker was only seven-tenths of the wages of the London worker. Paris, 68: the wage of the London worker is over 30 per cent. more than that of the Parisian

worker. Berlin, 57 ; since then it is very much worse. The only country in Europe where wages were on a level with ours is Holland."

In view of these facts, it is no exaggeration to conclude that, should the British labour revolt be indefinitely continued on the present lines, our industries would be destroyed, and the exchange of commodities necessary for the support of the present population would cease. But, in view of the balance of common sense prevailing in all classes of the community, that eventuality is not likely to occur.

The Divine command, given in the beginning, was to "increase and multiply and fill the earth." This command has not yet been fulfilled. We know that the earth is far from full. Though some cities may be crowded, there is space and to spare in the country areas even of the most thickly populated states. The population of Europe is approximately 100 to the square mile, that of America 14, and that of Australia 1.8. The average number of persons in England to the square mile is still considerably under 700 ; in the Empire it is not more than 12 or 13.

The transition of the fallacy of Malthus to the position of the birth controllers of to-day is easy. Malthus argued that, apart from moral control, poverty, vice, war, and a high death rate were necessary to keep down the population. Therefore the Neo-Malthusians argue from the same premises that a high birth rate is the cause of these evils. The latest theory, in common w th the old doctrine, of which it is the logical outcome, exaggerates the dangers of over-population in

relation to subsistence. But by subsistence it no longer implies merely the necessities and reasonable utilities of life. It includes a generous and ever-expanding standard of comfort and luxury. To obtain this standard and to check the growth of population, the advocates of the system do not stop at *moral* restraint, but urge the adoption of *immoral* methods for the purpose of voluntary control.

The present propaganda, therefore, is no longer merely a matter of economic theory ; it is a positive attack on the fecundity of marriage and the moral values involved in the observance of the natural law of generation. Nor is the injury that contraceptive teaching inflicts confined to the married. The unmarried are no less endangered by the dissemination of this evil knowledge, and by the discussion of its methods. The propaganda is an offence to public decency and a cause of general lowering of the moral sense of the people ; especially is it a temptation to young persons who might otherwise maintain their purity to indulge in shameful, promiscuous relations, hurtful to body and soul.

These are some obvious incidental dangers of the system.

The other inherent and outstanding evils of the new teaching, which comprises the very ills it professes to prevent or alleviate, remain to claim our attention.

CHAPTER VII

THE CURSE OF BIRTH CONTROL

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BIRTH control, the latest product of the new morality, is announced by the Malthusian League as a new discovery of Science, marking a fresh triumph of the spirit over the blind forces of nature, and giving the surest hope for the moral regeneration of the race. As a matter of fact, the " new discovery " is not new, is not a discovery, is not useful ; least of all is it scientific. In reality modern birth control is merely the reappearance, under a new name, of the old vice of Onanism. The crime stands for an inversion or perversion of function which, in or out of marriage, is abhorent to science. The earliest recorded indictment of birth control is contained in the thirty-eighth chapter of the Book of Genesis, where it is recounted that the Lord slew Onan because he did " a detestable thing." The " detestable thing " of Onan—or, in the translation of the Authorised Version, " the thing which displeased the Lord " — was the voluntary frustration of the purpose of generation in the use and enjoyment of the act.

Now, this indulgence of the sex impulse—the strongest in human nature—without the justification and restraint

of its end is the intrinsic evil of every venereal excess. It is the definite cause or reason why human law in all ages has regarded these excesses as shameful, punishable, and unnatural offences. Further, this is precisely the evil of birth control. The practice, stripped of all euphemism, is the voluntary prevention of pregnancy through the use of chemical, mechanical, or other artificial contraceptive methods in marriage. What is this if it is not in fact a wilful opposition to the purpose of the Creator, Who made the carnal relation between man and woman a means not for lust, but for the procreation through love and the informing of offspring?

The practice of birth control is therefore immoral. It is a perversion of the function of sex, a sin of luxury against nature, a "detestable thing" displeasing to God and to all right-minded men. And yet the hateful thing is presented as a rational and a humane doctrine; it is even proclaimed to be a new evangel for promoting love and security in marriage, welfare of offspring, and moral and physical advantage to the race.

Contrast this new evangel with the Gospel of Christ on marriage, set forth by St. Paul: "Let marriage be honourable in all things, and the bed undefiled' (Heb. xiii. 4).

The Christian gospel honours and sanctifies, the Neo-Malthusian teaching defiles and dishonours wedlock and love. The modern teaching is not of Christ. It is a devil's gospel, deceitful, sacrilegious, blood-guilty. It defrauds marriage of honour, robs love of holiness, and, in the name of saving the life of the race, commits race suicide and murder.

The birth control advocated is deceitful and fraudulent. It proves a fiend that

> " Keeps the word of promise to the ear,
> And breaks it to our hope."

While it simulates marriage, it circumvents the noblest purpose of that sacred union, and devastates the home.

It is sacrilegious because it outrages the sanctity of marriage. At the shrine of love it neglects love's duty and desecrates the altar of the hearth.

It is blood-guilty, because to cowardly fear and selfish gratification it is prepared to sacrifice the potentialities of life and the future of the race. At the gate of life it forbids life entrance, and welcomes death.

If one were asked off-hand to mention the greatest evil of the day, one might reasonably point to the abuse of marriage by the practice of birth control and the growing knowledge and use of contraceptive methods. It is a form and cause of immorality which inflicts the heaviest penalty on the whole of society. It is a curse to the individual, to the family, to the nation, to the race ; those who teach it are, wittingly or unwittingly, amongst the worst enemies of mankind.

Racially, birth control is self-condemned by its object. What does it tend to procure in practice ? Sterility. This is the greatest curse that can afflict a nation or people. The first need of civilization is the fruitfulness of the race. Development is due to increase, not to decrease. Only to growing nations is given the promise of hope and glory. Sterility artificially produced by vice has caused the extinction of splendid civilizations

in the past. The great cities of Cambodia and Guatemala in Indo-China and Central America, and Crete in Europe, 2,000 years before Christ, are reputed to have succumbed to this cause. Babylon, Assyria and Carthage are other examples. Centuries later this same evil contributed to bring about the downfall of Greece and Rome. In our own day little more than fifty years of artificial birth control has already created, in many countries of Europe and America, a critical vital problem which is causing grave anxiety to politicians and statesmen. In some countries, notably France, the rate of depopulation has become an actual menace of speedy extinction. In our own country the position, though less acute, is extremely grave. As the evidence given before the Birth Rate Commission and statistics prove, birth control, or the artificial limiting of families, is spreading fast through all sections of our people, and amongst the upper and middle classes the practice is tending to become almost universal. In 1801 the population of England and Wales was 8,893,000. In fifty years these figures were more than doubled. In the year 1850 the birth rate per thousand of the population registered 32, and rose to its maximum 36.3 in 1876. Since then it has fallen to about 24, and still shows a tendency to decline. The birth rate in England in 1921 was 22.4 ; in 1922 it was 20.6 ; and the second quarter of 1923 registered 22.7, the lowest in any second quarter except during the War. The natural increase of population for the quarter referred to (1923, second quarter), by excess of births over deaths, was 82,791, as against 129,345, 116,832 and 80,235 in the second

quarters of 1920, 1921, and 1922. In 1911 the population of England and Wales numbered 34,045,290. The figures resulting from the next census in 1921 were 35,678,530, an increase in the decade of only slightly over a million. In regard to the decline in the birth rate, the Registrar-General for England has made the important statement that not more than about 17 per cent. of the falling off can be accounted for as the result of abstinence from marriage, or of postponement of marriage, but that nearly 70 per cent. must be ascribed to the practice of artificial limitation of the family.

The significance of these figures is written large on the pages of history. Nations cannot for long remain stationary. They must either increase or decline, advance or decay. To-day British influence is at the height of its opportunity and greatness. The loss of that influence would be a catastrophic set back to the peace and ordered freedom of the world, and to the cause of civilization as we know it. This much the friends and enemies of Great Britain admit. Meanwhile the fate of the Empire is in the hands of the people of England, the imperial stock on which the overseas Dominions depend. It is almost unthinkable that a great nation which has made incalculable sacrifices for justice and liberty in the past, and has recently won the admiration of the world by enduring the heaviest financial, social and domestic losses since the War of 1914, will so fail in magnanimity as to refuse any longer to carry the natural burdens and responsibilities of a unique and splendid position. The attitude of the

country within the next few years to the birth control propaganda will be the test. May wise counsels prevail.

Our reigning Sovereign, King George V, on a solemn occasion, uttered these words of warning: "The foundations of national glory are in the homes of the people. They will only remain unshaken while the family life of our race and nation is strong, simple and pure." Lord Dawson of Penn, the King's Physician, recently said, with obvious approval of the limitation of families, "Birth control is come to stay." The King's dictum is an honest and patriotic expression of truth, for which the nation is deeply indebted. Lord Dawson's is the deplorable expression of a most dangerous error. An aggravating circumstance is the fact that the speech containing this error was addressed to the whole nation at the Birmingham Church Congress in 1921, and met with no immediate protest or denial from any theologian of the Established Church. And yet the doctrine was an attack on the teaching of the Bishops of the Church of England, which, in common with the Catholic Church, officially denounces the doctrine of artificial birth control as fallacious in principle, and contrary to the natural and Divine Law.

Birth control claims to prevent industrial distress and poverty. In fact, it has the contrary tendency. In well-regulated states, population and wealth go together. Poverty, on the other hand, is ordinarily associated with thinly populated countries. Increase of population normally stimulates production. It is the natural cause of wealth.

Richard Cobden, in a passage describing Russia in 1836, quoted by Dr. Sutherland in his book on "Birth Control," states: "The mass of the people are sunk in poverty, ignorance and barbarism, scarcely rising above a state of nature, and yet it has been estimated that this country contains more than 750,000 square miles of land, of a quality not inferior to the best portions of Germany, and upon which a population of 200 millions might find subsistence."

Again, birth control claims to help the workers, and especially the women portion, by reducing their numbers and so raising wages. The principle involved is that of supply and demand. If there are fewer workers, other things being equal, their wages should be higher. Granted; but the condition of other things being equal is wanting. Birth control is to be applied to rich and poor, to consumers and workers. Therefore the proportion of each will at least remain the same; and for this reason there can be no ground for hope of improvement. Further, more luxuries will be required by the higher standard of comfort. Therefore there will be greater waste of productive energy, more poverty, and a worse distribution of wealth. But the greatest danger of all involved in this recommendation is the distraction of public attention from the real needs and requirements of social reforms to a quack remedy which is worse than the disease. As regards women workers, the system would reduce them to the worst possible condition. Motherhood in the past has been the dignity and protection of woman in both the home and the workshop. If this safeguard were

removed, she would be at the mercy of the caprice and avarice of man. Wives, under a system of birth control, would be liable, after serving the lust of their husbands, to be employed to the full in the labour market; and this, it is feared, would in fact be the lot of very many.

The system also claims to promote peace and to prevent war and aggression.

It is argued that one of the conditions that makes a nation a menace to others and leads to war is a high birth rate and a low death rate. But the converse is no less true—a low birth rate and a diminishing population, by reducing the power of defence, is an incentive to a stronger and envious nation to invade its weaker neighbour. In 1850 the population of France was equal to that of Germany, both numbering approximately 35,500,000; in 1913 the population of France was little more than half that of Germany, France numbering 39,600,000, and Germany 67,000,000. Had France maintained a population equal to her rival, it is not rash to conclude that the war of 1914 would never have occurred. The necessary guarantee of international peace is the subordination of national interests and ambitions to justice and high moral principles.

An apology, from another standpoint, of birth control is that it has the compensating effect of diminishing the death rate. The plea is put forward that a high birth rate is the cause of a high death rate, and that therefore the lessening of the birth rate will confer a benefit on the community without adding to its numbers. This is a cloak to cover the real danger of national

extinction. There is a limit to the lowering of the death rate, which, seeing that all must die, is eventually fixed by population. But there is no limit, except extinction, to the possible fall of the birth rate. If no children were born, the population would cease and the limit of extinction would be reached. A low birth rate will, of course, immediately lower the death rate, because for a time the population of healthy adults is in excess of the babies and young children, who are more liable to die. But in time the proportion of the aged and infirm will correct any temporary improvement, and the death rate will assume its normal condition. Therefore, in the long run, birth control will be found to lessen the birth rate without the alleged compensation of the lowering of the death rate.

The ground of national welfare on which the doctrine of restriction was first propagated has already begun to be shaken. The countries of Europe were said to be over-populated, and to reduce the excess of population recourse was advocated to the immoral methods of voluntary birth control. The nations, however, which allowed themselves to submit to these abuses have found out, to their cost, the devastating nature of their mistake, and are taking active means to suppress the deadly propaganda in their midst. France, Germany, Russia, and the United States, have all enacted laws prohibiting or restricting by criminal statute the publishing and distribution of literature dealing with the subject of contraceptive methods in practice. This is a sufficiently clear evidence, coming as it does from statesmen and legislatures without any particular

religious bias, of the anti-social and anti-national tendencies of these immoral practices. The attack on the fecundity of marriage is, therefore, now somewhat changing, or at least modifying, its standpoint ; and Neo-Malthusian practices are being defended on ethical and humanitarian rather than on utilitarian and economic grounds, particular emphasis being laid on the feminist doctrine of freedom from sex servitude for women. The contention is that the practices in question, so far from being immoral, are a moral triumph over nature, a victory of reason and will promising the moralization of marriage in the future, and the elevation of the sex relation to a spiritual plane.

The sophism of this fundamental ethical position is apparent. Artificial prevention is a purely physical, and in no sense a moral, subjugation of nature. There is no conquest, nor indeed any attempt at conquest, of the passions. Only their natural consequences are prevented. Now, the prevention of these natural consequences in no way assists to control sexual passion, or to submit it to the rule of the spirit. On the contrary, it enormously strengthens the sex impulse, and enables it to overrule and dominate reason. For these consequences truly represent the responsibilities and sanctities which are the chief ornament and bulwark of marriage, and its redeeming character. If they are removed, the moral and spiritual associations of the sex life are torn away, and only its brute elements of sexual gratification and pleasure remain.

Now, this unnatural divorce of the material and the spiritual in sex life clearly constitutes a perversion of

the moral order, and is entirely opposed to every true principle of ethics. In practice it leads to the subordination of reason to purely animal instincts, and the subjection of the whole moral and spiritual nature to the tyranny of erotic emotions and physical passions. In other words, in sexual intercourse, a function wherein man approaches most nearly to the brute, reason is too easily sunk in passion. Therefore, without the restraining motive of procreation, which is the end proper to marriage, such intercourse is degrading and brutalizing.

Hence, instead of moralizing and spiritually elevating the sex relation, the system of voluntary birth control tends directly to debase and degrade it.

A specious humanitarian argument is based on the liberation of suffering women from the burden of excessive child-bearing. On this ground, at least, may not Neo-Malthusianism be recommended? Again the answer must be in the negative. The relief of these methods is apparent rather than real. Any immediate alleviation they might afford in some cases is wholly incommensurate with the additional burden of suffering, physical and mental, which they entail. Moreover, the breaking-down of the restraints on sexual passion, which we have seen to be involved in these practices, has a special tendency to brutalize the male sex, and to render the man selfish and reckless. Now, the horrors and cruelties arising from this source would be intensely more terrible and destructive to female happiness than the worst sufferings of the most excessive child-bearing.

The sole effective means of succouring women in the evil under consideration is the promotion of restraint, unselfishness, and chivalry in men. But this can only be obtained through the spiritualization and control of sexual love.

The plea of racial health is raised on behalf of this doctrine of Neo-Malthusianism by its Eugenist advocates, who argue that this artificial interference with nature will allow weak or undesirable persons to marry without risk to the community. But racial health cannot be secured by such methods, even though they led—which they do not—to the birth of none but the most desirable children. For it is unquestionable that the chief factors of racial, as well as of individual health, are moral and spiritual rather than material or mechanical, psychical rather than physical. The first condition, therefore, for racial health is the building of character and the assertion of the rule of the spirit over the material body.

As a matter of fact, also, Neo-Malthusian practices do not increase the proportion of births of desirable over less desirable children, but have the opposite influence. Experience proves that it is the healthiest couples, and not the physically unfit, or less fit, who make the chief use of these unnatural means. Robust well-to-do women, who are capable of thoroughly enjoying the material advantages and pleasures of life, are far more inclined to shrink from the constraints of motherhood than are their poorer and more delicate sisters, who most frequently earnestly desire and welcome children.

The injurious effects to the nervous and bodily health of individuals from the use of contraceptives are well known. They are a part of the stern Nemesis with which Nature invariably visits those who, in defiance of her law, yield their members to unnatural vice. The cause is in part physical, in part psychical. It lies essentially in the interference with the normality of the act of generation, which should be the spontaneous and complete response of a natural function. The employment of contraceptives implies the opposite elements of a deliberate misuse and an incomplete satisfaction. To women, for whom the full term of the act of generation comprises childbirth and motherhood, the harm to body and mind is far greater than is the case with men, whose satisfaction of the sex instinct is more remotely connected with the motive of the act.

In further support of the moral contention, the argument is advanced that family limitation is a necessary alternative to vice and abortion. To properly constituted human nature, even apart from the assistance of the Christian religion, the need for any alternative of the sort would be difficult to prove. Moreover, experience teaches that this suggested alternative has failed, and that with the spread of Neo-Malthusianism all manner of vice has grown, and that in particular there has been an increase of abortion. Thus, at Liège, in Belgium, where the doctrine of birth control is very widespread, Dr. Dejace, quoted by Canon de Smet in "Betrothment and Marriage," tells us that one out of every three cases of pregnancy is terminated criminally. There is also an increase of fornication,

owing to the lessened fear of conception and responsibility for children.

To conclude, therefore, the theory and practice of birth control offer no remedy for either individual or collective human ills, nor do they confer any benefit on the race. On the contrary, the system is destructive and demoralizing. It breaks down the physical stamina and moral character of men and nations, and tends to the physical and spiritual bankruptcy of the race. It is a curse to the individual, to the nation, to mankind. In regard to individual countries the evil is palpable. Birth control weakens the country's power of production; it weakens its power of defence; it weakens its power of intelligence and morality; it weakens the very life blood of the limited offspring which actually is born, for such offspring, coming as it does from a principle already marked by weakness, softness and decay, is necessarily tainted.

The question is often asked, "Is there no remedy for hard cases?" The answer is that there are lawful alleviations, but that artificial control is not one of them. The alleviations allowed are the methods of moral control or self-restraint which oppose no positive obstacle in the way of procreation, and allow of natural intercourse within the limits of reason and prudence. In this connection it must be remembered that the Divine and natural law to "increase and multiply" is conditioned, as all positive law, by circumstances, and that moderation has its place in marriage as in all other natural functions. Moreover, the use of marriage is always at the discretion of the partners, and subject

to their mutual consent. Conjugal chastity, also, is a virtue proper to the sacrament of marriage which enables those who accept its grace to live happily without being enslaved by their passions. The limited use of marriage is, therefore, within the rights of the married, and the habit of moderate restraint for physical and moral fitness is recommended by both reason and religion. There are causes which allow of even drastic restraint, and it may be suggested to some to make use of marriage only *tempore ageneseos*, or at the time which is less suitable for fecundation—that is, between the fourteenth or fifteenth day after the commencement of the menstrual discharge and the third and fourth day before the following one. This time is commonly known as the mid-menstrual period. During this period conception may occur, but it is less likely than at other times. Consequently intercourse restricted to this time is not a positive defiance to nature. In respect of extreme cases, when it is feared that another confinement may prove fatal to the wife, it may be answered in general that the danger of death from childbirth is most often exaggerated, and that, owing to the progress of obstetrics and surgery at the present day, the danger of death may, in nearly all cases, be provided against by the timely employment of the proper means ; but that in cases where the danger cannot be averted, the parties must either take the risk or avoid it by the observance of continency. For persons in this unfortunate position there is need of Christian fortitude. But to those who have a high and spiritual idea of marriage, and a firm faith in the supernatural help of

the Sacrament, even this degree of heroism is surely attainable.

If any apology is needed for writing at length on the subject of this abuse of marriage, it is the simple one of sheer necessity. The propaganda and practice of birth control are widespread and notorious. Advice and knowledge concerning it are broadcasted through the Press and current literature. If this pernicious propaganda is to be counteracted, it must be met by a contrary opinion plainly and clearly expressed. The evil is too strong to be ignored, and the danger too great to be lightly or timidly treated. Unnatural methods have long been practised on the Continent of Europe, and especially in France, with alarming results. But the case of our own country, as has been said, is sufficiently grave. Since 1875 the English birth rate has been steadily diminishing, and only in the last two or three years has it shown any sign of even stabilizing. Preventive checks have been multiplied, and immoral practices resorted to, which were never dreamed of before. Large families are the exception, and many houses are childless. Death stands at the threshold of the hearths and homes of the people, and threatens the life of the nation and the foundations of the Empire's greatness. Yet this is far from all. The things of the spirit live ; moral values survive. If this generation ignore a crime against nature and God, it brands itself with lasting infamy. The supreme need of the day is plain-spoken truth. Our own country, humanity, God, all demand this witness at our hands.

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